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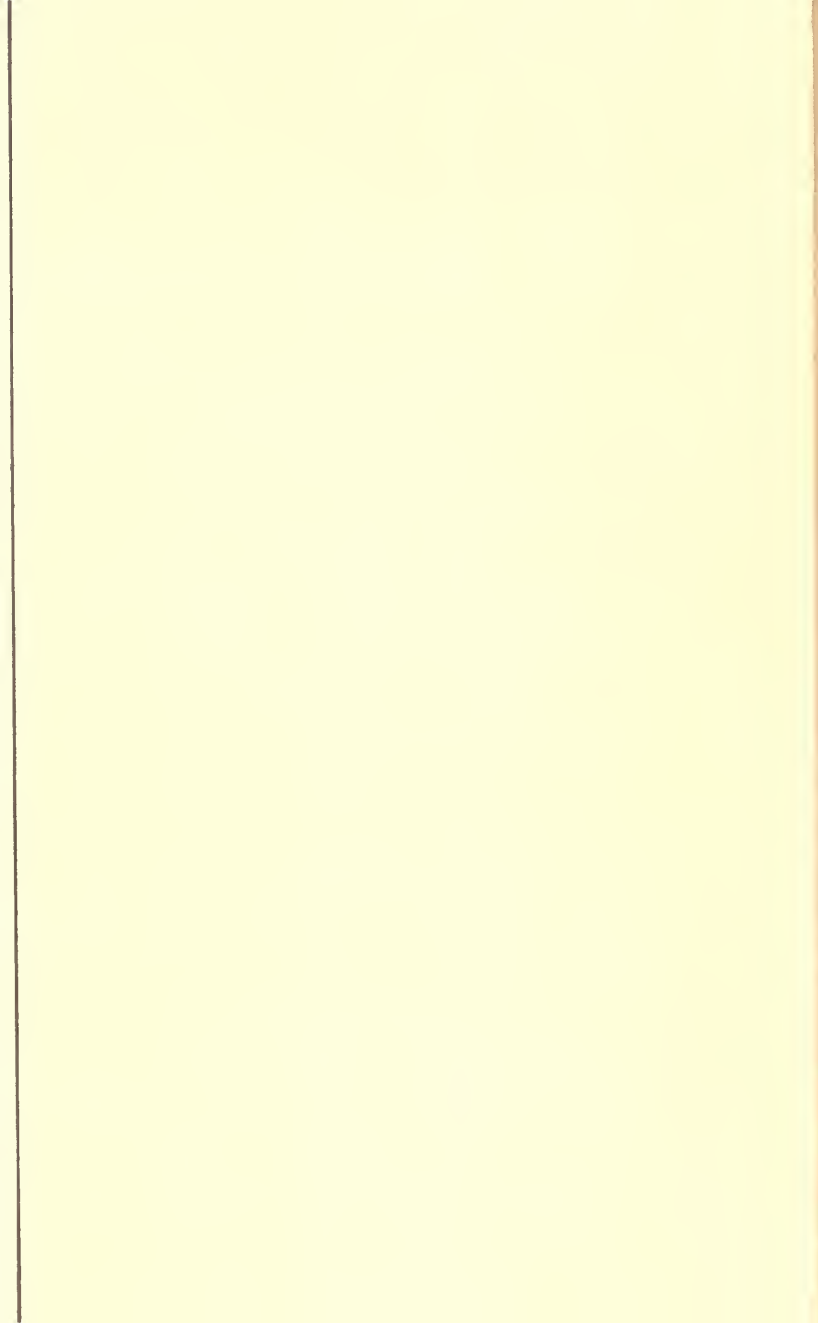


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ENGLAND UNDER GOD.

BY THE

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AUTHOR OF "THE RECTORY OF VALEHEAD."

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P R E F A C E .

THIS work insists on a presumption which perhaps the peculiar quality of the English reader alone could justify. It presents a suggestion and not a narrative of the history of his country, and appeals to such an acquaintance with its detail, as can only be found in a people, whose self-respect has raised in their hearts a patriotic curiosity concerning the course of events which has brought them into a condition of so unusual welfare and dignity. This has been observed by foreigners as a remarkable point in our national character. Thus Frederic Schlegel, in his *Philosophy of History* (Lecture xvii.), has remarked that, “more than any other nation, the English are conversant with their own annals, and have them ever before their eyes,

and live in the past with all the intense feelings of the present." And we may feel more gratified with his declaration of the fact than with his explanation of the reason. Others also have expressed their admiration at seeing the most perfect liberty in Europe clad in a more picturesque medieval dress here than is worn by the most antiquated despotism elsewhere. The same fond reference to national history is evinced by the choice of Shakspeare as to the subjects of so many of his plays, and the popularity which they have maintained down to this day. The reason is obvious enough. The tenacious good common sense of the English has gradually from time to time derived its new from its old, and so cautiously as that it should imply the existence of the old, and be, as it were, a monument of it. She has left it to philosophers to glory in the extirpation of the old, and to reap the shame and sorrow of having accomplished it together with the loss of the new.

Such is the advantage of the ground thus

taken. A review is proposed, and not a narrative. Indeed, the latter would be accompanied with insuperable difficulties, if undertaken on the argument proposed in the following pages. For in the record of private life there is much of that daily commonplace with which a feeling of reverence forbids us to mingle mention of the operation of the divine will, however deeply impressed our minds may be with the truth that not a sparrow falls to the ground without our Father—(Matthew x. 29). And accordingly, there is danger of giving more offence than edification. So, in a record of our national life, there is much of ordinary matter which cannot be omitted, while the continual ascription of it to direct providential operation may offend reverent minds, and affect them with incredulity rather than persuasion.

To this study of our national life every one, if he would truly profit withal, should bring the study of his private life. He will feel himself twice as much an Englishman, and twice as much a Christian. The wave of political life

washing into the creeks of domestic life, carries in and carries out, and thus there is a continual renovation of matter, together with a wholesome ripple of agitation ; and a continual identification of individual blessings with public blessings is produced. He and his country are one, and are under one and the same glorious Lord Governor. May the following pages contribute to such a result.

ENGLAND UNDER GOD.

CHAPTER I.

On God's Election of Nations for Instruments of his Service.

To the mind which is truly set upon search after instruction, history should supply the knowledge of people and institutions, and not merely of rulers and wars. It should discover the germ, the growth, the ripeness of some grand principle of national polity, and should manifest some convergence of fortunes to the point of the grand action of this world—the coming of Christ in his kingdom. Of course sacred history alone can suffice for a complete answer to such a demand; and it is but now and then, and here and

there, that the course of profane history will exhibit the requisite direction. Indeed, to two nations only—one among those of the ancient world, the other among those of the modern—has it been allowed to advance from a beginning, through a middle, to an end of a career, so plainly as to testify satisfactorily to the hand of God especially directing it. These are the Roman and the English: the former, in its arts, unfolding the system of civil law, which at this day is concerned more or less in the civilization of the European states, and with its arms providing the means of the most sure and rapid propagation of the Gospel: the latter in its institutions exhibiting the progress of constitutional liberty to the eyes of an admiring world, and through its colonial empire furnishing a highway for the progress of the Gospel to the end of the earth.

This, our high prerogative, has not met with sufficient notice. Writing for the world, our historians have confined their view to the external operation and worldly form of our national

life. They have not remarked the internal peculiarity which could come but from divine impression. For example, England and France have each undergone a tremendous crisis of change. But the Frenchman has made it so utter as to seem to condemn as to deserved oblivion all her history which has preceded the narrative of her terrible Revolution, thence dating a new era, which has no more reference to what has gone before than the volcano has to the soil through which it has burst, or to the structures which it has overthrown. The Englishman, on the contrary, beholds in the daily operation of his institutions, and in the facts of common life, the prolongation of an eventful and most interesting history, so as to be at once both reader and actor.

But such peculiarity lies deeper than common notice cares to go. So that while the political history of our country attracts deep attention, and the relation which our kingdom has borne to the kingdoms of the world has been diligently traced out, the providential

direction of its mind and action, and the relation in which it stands to the kingdom of Heaven, has not been explained, nor acknowledged with that deference which the Christian is bound to pay. To vindicate this neglected point is the purpose of the following pages. On its thankful observation depends the favour which has exalted us. May the Lord God of England help the heart and mind of the writer.

That grand mystery of the counsel of God which concerns the admission of all nations of the world into his Church—that treasure of his love, which had been locked up in reserve since the world began—was revealed from the lips of Christ at Bethany, when he gave to his Apostles that solemn charge, “Go ye and teach all nations” (Matthew xxviii. 19) ; and it was poured forth under the attesting descent of the Holy Ghost at Ceserea, in the house of the Roman centurion, who joyfully believed together with his friends.

New, however, as it then was, the prepara-

tion for its day and hour had long been proceeding in times of old ; and Israel, who had fondly thought himself the end of God's manifest and glorious dealings on earth, was discovered to have been but the early and local instrument of his means, and furnished in rudiments with all the requisite knowledge from on high, and bodily posted on the highway of transit between the East and West. There, had he been faithful, he would have been a city on a hill, and have presented a lively type and earnest of Him who was to come for a light to lighten the Gentiles. But he failed in his duty, and thenceforward God, employing him still as his instrument, but in less direct operation and more humble condition, wrung out from his adversity that service which had been withheld by his prosperity. Therefore, instead of keeping him together for his people in dense concentration, as one body of light, He scattered him in bands of outcasts, as bright sparks, to the East and to the West, throughout the nations.

Thus the Jews were received into mighty empires which had been builded by his hand in preparation. The Babylonian and the Persian in the East, the Greek in the East and West, the Roman in the West, gave them successively lodging among them, especially in their great cities, where they were lights amid the darkness of the innumerable masses of their population; and becoming even unconscious teachers to unconscious learners, supplied the elements of a doctrine which all but a remnant of their body rejected as soon as they discovered its real bearing. Having thus been found wanting on a second trial, having refused the alternative of which the long suffering of God had still admitted, the Jew was removed finally from his post; and even within the century which elapsed from the day of the pronouncement of that charge of the Head of God's Church, he had vanished from amidst the blessed train of his missionaries, and the Circumcision had ceased to affect with any peculiarity even its native Church of Jerusalem. They who sought for

him had to cross over and look for him henceforward amid the host of God's declared enemies.

But he was no longer missed. His work had been done. Churches sufficient in strength and number for carrying on the great work had been founded among the Gentiles, and, unshackled by any remaining fetter of the old covenant, endeavoured to reach, as far as horse or ship could carry their preachers. And the Lord himself was now both continually shortening the necessary stretch of that reach, and also adding to its closeness of grasp by stirring up the nations from their old seats, and clustering an immense front of them along the boundary of the Roman empire; while, at the same time, He so ordered it that the requisite communication should become more ready within.

Thus, the Gospel being spread through the provinces, reached the people that lay in darkness beyond, and even the remote Caledonian rejoiced in its light. Yet this was but a partial

operation, and the consequent conversion was individual rather than national. Therefore, in course of time, this Gentile instrument also had done its appointed work, however unconsciously, and then it also was broken and removed out of the way, to make room for another agency, more close and communicative. The Roman Empire was divided among the nations. But as kings when deposed have become schoolmasters, and thus the subdued Greek taught the Roman, so now the subdued Roman taught the Barbarian, and delivered to him not the false and human, but the true and divine philosophy. Accordingly, the Gospel pervaded the body of the nations that had settled within the Empire, and from them it passed in successive although irregular waves to the nations in all parts of the Old World which still retain it, and to many from which, like an ebbing tide, it has since receded.

Thus, then, from the first, the Churches were supplied with an agency sufficient for transmitting the Gospel to all the nations of the

Old World, and there seems no reason so far why the Lord's commandment could not be executed from nation to nation, until the end had been reached. But what was to be done, when a new world, larger still and exclusively heathen, and of a different heathenish type moreover, was discovered across the wide ocean to the sight of astonished Christendom? At the nearest point it lay about two thousand miles from the westernmost part of Europe. It was plain that the old means of the propagation of the Gospel had been superseded, or must at least be much modified and further extended. It may indeed still go by water, for the passage was still more freely open than before, and scarcely a third longer than the shortest that it could have made from Jerusalem to London. It would arrive also without a tedious and perhaps adulterative transmission from nation to nation. A single ship may now carry it at once as safely and genuinely as it had formerly carried it across to Britain from Boulogne to Richborough.

But who was now to send the preachers? Rome had then included the best part of that island into her empire, and transferred her frontier into its northern region. But still the same plan on a proportionally enlarged scale may be pursued. A country of the Old World, having the Church of God abiding in it, and furnished with a population sufficient in quantity to spare for emigration, and in quality to suit successful settlement, may supply, as far as itself goes, the old means, and with new and much fuller application. And, supposing several such countries, we may expect the frontier of a Christian territory on their own soil to be presented to the heathen in diverse regions. And inasmuch as the hand of God can be traced by the Christian eye throughout the building of the Roman Empire, from the union of the Tuscan and Latin nations in the basin of the Tiber to that of the Roman and Briton in the Atlantic Ocean, so it may also in the history of such countries, where at least they have succeeded in permanently fixing the

pure Church of God in the land which He has assigned to them.

The Empire of Russia, indeed, overlapping Asia with a skirt thrown across a strait into Western America, can dispense with the passage across the wide ocean. But her time, if to come, is not yet come. At present her progress, advancing with a thinly peopled barbarous border, has little benefited civilization, and therefore has been as little favourable to evangelization. The New World, however, lying open to Europe on its eastern quarter, bids us look to the nations of the west of Europe. And here also few are they which answer to all the secular conditions which the case plainly requires. Such are—

I. A territory of proper magnitude and fertility, with a sufficient border on the Atlantic Ocean.

II. A certain quantity, and peculiar quality of the population.

III. Sufficient exclusion from interruption caused by neighbours.

IV. An order of historical events which shall at once train the people, and bring it into communication with the uttermost part of the earth.

Thus briefly as abstractedly put at present, these will unfold their practical meaning as we proceed.

On turning and looking at the map of the world, we find but a comparatively short strip of land any part of which answers even to the very first of these. It extends from the Cattegat of the Baltic to the Straits of Gibraltar. There we first of all meet with Denmark, answering well the demand of situation, but not of size in the first, and of quality though not quantity in the second, and of seclusion in the third; but without anything in the fourth sufficient to compensate for deficiency in the others. Hence she has indeed had settlements, but they have been scattered and insignificant: though we must never forget that her missionaries have been the pioneers of our Church in India. She has the merit of having done all that she could.

But very considerable, indeed, and quite gigantic in proportion to native geographical extent, has been that of her next southern neighbour, Holland. And yet having but one side of her small frontier on the sea, and lying open along all the rest to the wide continent, and limited in her population, she imperfectly replies to any of the above conditions individually. But the advantages of the quality of her population, roused to the pitch of its native excellency by the terrible struggle of the Reformation, and of the seclusion which she was long enabled to maintain in self-defence by fortifying a land of dykes against an open neighbourhood, so outweighed the disadvantages, and generally fulfilled the conditions, that she placed herself early in the first rank of the colonial powers. But as soon as she gave up her seclusion by taking side with France, she surrendered the essence of her colonial dominion, and the better half of its territory has been taken away from her, and given to England.

Prodigiously superior still seem the resources of France on these points. With two-fifths of her frontier on the Atlantic, containing noble harbours, with another fifth secured partly by the Mediterranean, partly by the Pyrenees, with the whole occupying a large extent of territory and covering it proportionally with a sprightly population, she might have answered the two first conditions most strictly, excepting as to the quality of the population, which is so unfavourable on the one point of its vain-glorious unsteadiness. Here, accordingly, has come her failure. It did not allow her to take due advantage of the third condition, but on the contrary tempted her to a continual removal of her neighbour's landmark throughout the range that lay open to her, and so to a sacrifice for the near, brilliant, and uncertain, of the distant, solid, and certain. She therefore rapidly acquired a superb colonial dominion, at the head of which she long disputed on hardly unequal terms with England, and yet forfeited to her adversary almost the whole

of it in the end. In that New World she remains all but childless at this day.

But we go southward still, and apparently meet with a more satisfactory answer from Spain—an immense peninsula, with a rugged isthmus, peculiarly fertile in soil, and rich in mines, so as to be able to support an amount of population sufficient for the maintenance of all the colonial territory that any country could reasonably occupy. And yet on this very point where France stumbled, she also failed. The quality of her population was unfavourable towards its attainment of due quantity. It was an ill-combined mixture of Castilian, Arragonese, and Moorish, of which the dominant part exhibited a spirit of such detestable avarice and cruel fanaticism, as dried up the sources of its increase, while it created a dearth of industry and talent. But her start on her race shows at once what she might have done, and the height of the calling from which she fell. She brilliantly led the way of discovery, and successfully for the time, but destructively

for the future, took the road to Transatlantic empire. This defect, however, on the second condition, has arrested her progress, and aggravated the unfitness which she had drawn on herself, by violating the third in an earlier stage, when she interfered with the concerns of the German empire, and in a later through her close and abject connection with France. And it has made her colonial history one of the most shocking narratives that can be read. Can we wonder that therefore her very treasures begat her poverty, spent in ruinous wars, in which she had no true interest, but the contrary, so that now she is but slowly beginning to recover (if, indeed, her ignorant fanaticism will ever allow her) from a lower condition than she could ever have fallen into, if she had not received the beautiful but fatal dowry of the Indies. At this day, when, with all her noble opportunities, she ought to have shown herself before the world a queen and a mother, she stands stripped nearly bare of the gorgeous raiment of her wedding-day, with

scarcely a child left to comfort her, and that living in ignorance and beggary. Never has been exhibited a more melancholy example of degradation from high and abused privilege. It speaks, indeed, and from it we may hear the Lord of the Church uttering those his usual words of most particular warning, "He that hath ears to hear let him hear."

The high colonial rank attained for a while by Portugal is truly remarkable, considering how imperfectly she fulfilled all the fore-mentioned conditions. One half of her frontier, indeed, lies along the Atlantic, but the other half lies open to Spain; but because to Spain only with nothing beyond, it has been most jealously guarded, and thus such seclusion has been obtained as might enable her, under vigorous sovereigns, to give a steady look to the sea before her. But her inconsiderable size, and not very favourable seaboard, would have been in the way of her attaining any permanent rank higher than that of a commercial power, even if her population, visited

from the same causes with the same fatal narrow-mindedness as that of Spain, had not lacked the requisite energy. The vigour of her outset has now a miserable response in settlements crumbling away from internal decay, so that the mere touch of external force would seem sufficient to reduce them to powder.

We now come to our own country : two islands lying together in the first depths of the Atlantic, answering, therefore, the first condition in all its fulness, and the second likewise as to the quantity and quality also of the population ; and the third, again, in the seclusion which an insular situation alone can give. The result has been in accordance. From a hardy, enterprising population of thirty millions, she is daily filling with dwellings the wastes of the New World, and stands at the head of a colonial empire, such as for magnitude and power no heart could ever have conceived, even if it had known the countries over which it now extends. Thus singular, she presents a phenomenon for the Christian

philosopher to study and be wise, as well as for the Christian patriot to admire and be thoughtful. And if the hand of God be discernible, so far as they rose, in the fabrication of those other colonial powers, every one of which took the start of her, how much more so must it be in her, who alone has arrived, not only in undiminished, but in increasing vigour, at this day, and, indeed, has all along derived much of her acquisition from her spoliation of them? Already some of her children have grown up, and left her house for a home of their own; others are in various stages of growth up to that point. And yet she has abundance of fertility and strength left in her for more birth, and there remains abundance of wilderness in her world-wide territory for her children to turn into a land of joyful habitation. May she go on her way rejoicing.

But all had been of no avail without the fulfilment of the fourth condition, which calls upon us to consider what a remarkable series

of events must have happened to augment and qualify her population, to swell the wretched million, on whom the victorious Norman heel had trampled, into the nation of thirty millions of bold, free men, whose rule now dictates firmly and gently to nearly two hundred millions of subjects throughout the world. And, again, with what wisdom was the hand of God put forth to fashion the peculiar character of our people, and inspire it with a proper spirit, and with what strength, also, so as to curb it in its pride, and by reserving it within the insular boundary, to concentrate the national strength upon the performance of the mighty work in the visible kingdom of Heaven, which it has been raised up to accomplish.

Here, in this historical, and not merely physical, suitableness of configuration of our country lies a subject of deep and thankful inquiry. We have been richly gifted with all the conditions necessary to the privilege of the instrumentality of a sea empire, framed for the conversion of the New World, which

is replacing the instrumentality of a land empire which had been framed for the conversion of the Old World. We have manifestly received the glorious election of God to such a post of service as He never established before. Others appeared for a time to have it, but they long ago have failed. We are abiding the test. Blessed be his holy name! May we prove true, and make that calling and election sure which we seem justified in inferring from the foregoing premises.

The detail of the demonstration of this highly-responsible position of our beloved country forms the subject of this treatise. May it fulfil its purpose; may it, under our Lord's gracious favour, open eyes to see, and ears to hear, and hearts of many to feel the high and awful calling which their country, and they, as individuals of that country have received; and over a work of faithful doing awake a song of exulting thanksgiving to the honour, worship, and glory of the Lord God of England!

CHAPTER II.

*On the peculiarly favoured State of England
as a Nation.*

WE have seen that it is the privilege of the true-hearted Englishman to be conscious of the guidance of the Lord's hand along the whole line of the fortunes of his country. If any end shall ever have appeared uncertain to his eye, and accordingly unsteady in its character, that has been only at first view, when, as it were through the unsteadiness of his own undisciplined mind in handling the subject, and impatience for the result, the unsettled needle of direction has trembled now towards the right, now towards the left: but it has soon rested in its proper position, and has ever since pointed without wavering to the quarter of God's providence. Variable indeed have

those fortunes been, so that the view taken by his mind along its spiritual journey will have been somewhat like that which is present to him in his travels on the railway. For often from a deep, dark tunnel of national straitness and depression he emerges upon an elevation where a wide and joyous spectacle of prosperity is expanded before him. And he will have learned to discern the insidious evil which comes out of specious good, as well as the sterling good which comes out of threatening evil. He, therefore, thankfully and dutifully acknowledges the point of time and place in his Church at which the good pleasure of his heavenly Master has posted him. There is no murmuring in the house, no complaining in the streets for him. He has looked past dangers full in the face, and seen them from the continued intensity of his gaze dissolve into deliverances. And so, says his wise and bold heart, they will again; it shall be now as heretofore it was of old, when "Our fathers hoped in Thee, they trusted in Thee, and Thou

didst deliver them.”—(Psalms xxii. 4.) So sings he in the house of his pilgrimage.

Thus his experience brings him a fulness of wisdom to his head, an abundance of energy to his heart, such as enables him to view without dismay, and encounter without shrinking, perils which in the eyes of his neighbours seem pregnant with terrible disaster. They wonder and charge him with stupid insensibility to his danger, and assure him that in spite of his escape he ought to have been ruined. The state of hairbreadth jeopardy in which we lived during the early part of this century did much to confirm this spirit, and make it even general. Thus often did our island seem to continental eyes to be foundering in the storm. But she reappeared on the top of the wave unharmed, with a crew scarcely conscious of any danger. And Englishmen of those days had their hearts so nurtured and disciplined by the daily sense of dependence on God’s gracious providence, and were so moved to it, not only by individual and domestic observation, but also by public

injunction, for the humiliation of the heart through fasting and prayer, that they lived in the familiar sight of the mighty works of the Lord, and of his wonders, in the deep, of troubles surging on troubles, and never to the day of their death forgot the lesson. Even the lightest hearts of the nation were like that of its old sailors, who, if they show little other profession of religion, always speak with deep awe of the hand of Providence.

But now a generation has grown up amidst almost uninterrupted peace and never imperilled security. It has been comparatively seldom, if ever, driven to feel how deep from the heart is the cry unto the Lord out of the tossing of trouble, and how thrilling the joyful hymn of deliverance out of distress when the storm has ceased, so that "the waves thereof are still, and they have been glad because they were at rest, and He hath brought them to the haven where they would be."—(Psalm cvii. 28-30.) A very different song, never heard then, or heard but to be immediately rebuked to silence, may

perhaps be heard now with less discouragement, saying, "It was our own arm that helped us." — (Psalm xliv. 3.) Some would even persuade us that we owe nothing, except short-coming, to the past, and are standing without any relation to God or fathers, upon ground of our own making, and there may build according to our fancy, and for our own exclusive profit, without a thanksgiving for the past, without a prayer for the future, but with a kind of defiant exultation in the present. They would have us think that the less we look backward so much the more directly and speedily we shall go forward. And yet this would not be true even if backward looks were avoided for the sake of the more steady working of the only right object which can be before us, which is the glory of God. For that glory is not seen there alone, so as to fix there the sole point of direction; but while it is seen there speculatively through faith in God, it is also seen in the past substantially through knowledge of the word of God. And we should put ourselves into the

place of the early subjects of a grand experience of God's deliverance, who, in leading his people forth out of Egypt, caused his angel, who had gone before the camp, to go behind, and his pillar, which had moved before their face, to move in their rear.—(Exodus xiv. 19.)

Then will come in its turn the time of direction from the front. For as Israel could not proceed in his journey towards the better land of Canaan from the worse of Egypt without seeing God behind him, no more can we in this our mental march. To enable us to contemplate this backward sight, is, as has been already stated, the object now proposed to the reader; who must, however, be led along the line of political events only. Ecclesiastical speak at once for themselves.

Let us look, in the first place, at the land of our birth. What a mere speck is it on this world's map. It seems worthy but of a moment's notice. Yet look but steadily and that moment will grow to a lifetime, and that speck into a seventh part of the earth, and

that seventh part will be seen still extending, as factories grow into colonies, and colonies into kingdoms. What seemed a point of matter has now proved to be a centre of life, political, civil, and religious, to a vast system which is extending itself daily with warmth and light into remote regions hitherto frozen and benighted with ignorance. We experience the intense interest of the patient astronomer, who has discerned in some faint star a centre of motion to a system which obeys the law by which his own home is moving round the sun. For that speck, seen in the faint distance of space and time, is found to unfold the grand machinery by which the Lord is bringing this world on the course which He has assigned to it for the coming of the kingdom of his dear Son. We see the development of powerful sovereign states, such as those of North America, of flourishing colonies arrived at various stages which mark their road to empire, and we gaze on beautiful reflections of our country's glory beaming upon us from every quarter of

this nether sphere—from Asia, from Africa, from America, from Australia—where India, the Cape, Canada, the West Indies, and the settlements on the continent and in the islands of Australia bear witness to her empire and general ministration of the supreme blessings of God to man. And these moreover are the prominent luminaries of a vast firmament which is overspread with her starry clusters of dominion from East to West, and from North to South, the least of them twinkling brightly amid the dim glory of ancient barbaric empires, where they appear as new stars bursting out in the midst of an old constellation, such as our settlements among the Chinese. And when we prolong our view into regions where she is not at home in her family, but abroad and a stranger, we find the representatives of her greatness and ministers of her prosperity in every mart, her flag flying in every port. Where, in short, is she unknown, where is she unfelt?

Now let us return from this wide and dazzling

spectacle, which language fails in adequately describing, and resume the sight of our own island, which eyes, filled with such glare, can hardly recover. And when recovered how lonely and insignificant is its appearance. Such contrast should lead us to study it the more, and while we turn over the pages of its history, the increase of our knowledge will increase our sense of its original loneliness and insignificance. For as we look back into the past, until we arrive at the extreme visible beginning, we find it an apt prototype of such barbarous islands as New Zealand at this day, which had indeed been a fit daughter to such a mother, had she then borne her.

Can we then restrain the conviction of a divine power working especially, though invisibly, in the change? Surely it were the worst infatuation to impute it to the cunning of man's mind and hand, however many and long ages we may be allowed to assume for its elaboration, and however uninterruptedly we may suppose generation after generation to have

advisedly continued with one mind the very peculiar succession of steps which were necessary to the building up so gigantic a moral and political coral-reef. Common knowledge of human nature, common acquaintance with the history of the world, at once forbid such a conclusion.

And this argument would be fortified, if needed, by another consideration. For we perceive that in the train of her progressive steps the word of her Lord God has shot up everywhere, as from seed in the track of the sower; so that churches of God, and provinces of the kingdom of Heaven, no less than capitals of nations and kingdoms of the earth, are among her institutions, growing with their growth through all lands, from those where their messengers of glad tidings mount the stately camel to traverse sunburnt plains, to those where they are drawn by harnessed dogs over snowy wastes. Can a true heart and sound mind stop short of confessing thankfully and joyfully that all is indeed God's work, all

composing the mighty engine of his hand, preparing the coming of that blessed day when "the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ: and He shall reign for ever and ever."—(Rev. xi. 15.) And will it not in thankful and fearful warning add those words, "Them that honour Me I will honour, and they that despise Me shall be lightly regarded."—(1 Sam. ii. 30.)

How can we do otherwise than consider it as one of the great works of this great world, which declare God's glory and proclaim his handiwork, though not so magnificently and openly to the eyes of all mankind, as the heavens and the firmament, yet more loudly and clearly because, through domestic institutions, more nearly, to our excited hearts. Here is a polity growing from a small and barbarous beginning by steady expansion through a succession of ages, until it has reached a condition, such as the world has never before seen, and even at this day can hardly understand, partly from the blindness of that envy

which nations entertain towards their more prosperous and powerful neighbours, and partly from inexperience arising out of the comparative imperfection of their own institutions. When and where have life and property had anything like the same security as here during the last two centuries? Where has intellect been more free to work, or moral character had more room for unfolding itself? It stands quite alone in the world's history up to the present hour.

How interesting, therefore, to the Christian heart is it to investigate the progress of this grand fabric of the Almighty hand, as it advances, not by mechanical necessity, but by moral choice, and therefore is indeed more complicated in its detail, but how much more grand and simple in its sum! Never was a better exercise for a spiritual mind in the task of endeavouring to trace God's way among so many crossing it in seemingly marked contradiction. But even as it knows that the planets are never more regularly on their round than

when they appear to be stationary, or even retrograde, so also it will recognize the progress of our polity in despite of seeming standstill or drawback. Disasters, which elsewhere have effectually stopped the machine, have here but steadied its working. Apparent quiet, suggesting weakness, has been the gathering up of strength before a successful effort: war most savage and desolating has proved to be the germ of augmented peace and plenty; and even the great political calamity of all—domestic dissension—has sent forth industrious swarms to cultivate distant lands, and add them to our territory; while the same cause in France added to the number and skill of her hereditary enemies. So does every part, duly examined, show the continued outstretching of the Lord's hand.

Other nations may gaze at the spectacle with wonder, and their philosophers assign this or that cause. But they are outside the veil of the sanctuary. We, who are inside, can, if we do not wilfully shut our eyes, see the power

and glory of God, and thankfully adore Him in the magnificent temple which He has built for us. Oh ! may we never forget the end of another temple which He built for a people, and when they ceased to be faithful, unbuilt it again by a terrible destruction. Let us adore his mercy in sight of such mighty and gracious exhibition towards us, and cry, “ O Lord our Governor, what is man that Thou art mindful of him, and the son of man that Thou visitest him ? ”



CHAPTER III.

On the peculiar Physical Position of England.

ON our coming to take up in detail the proposed consideration, care must be taken to make sure of the proper standing-place, so as to have a full and clear survey of the broad facts and critical events which have led in detail to so great an end. We must often require many historical particulars to be put together before we can satisfactorily determine their general complexion, even as we often require a considerable body of some liquids to be formed before we can discern their colour. But the number may be very much reduced by careful selection of such as combine many others, either as being representatives of their working, or actual results of their work. Such bear a peculiar stamp, and, by association,

bring forth all the rest into the field of view. And when the mind has once arranged them in due order of succession, they form ever after a series of stations, as it were, of prophetic fulfilment, each being the accomplisher of one and forerunner of the other, until the last shall have been reached at the present day. Thus it can pass a trustworthy judgment on the sum of the whole series, and thence deduce the final bearings of much that is now in course through the world; and see light beyond darkness, and hope where the kingdoms are fainting with despair; and descry the beginning of the world to come where the world which now is seems sinking to its end. Such an investigation will not fail of finding the truth.

These events may be conveniently arranged in two classes, according as we view the Almighty hand impelling good or overruling evil; some therefore of a positive, others of a negative character. Accordingly, the plan proposed will show through what progress in good

and what escape from evil the hand of the Lord God Almighty hath brought our nation up to its present enjoyment of wealth and dominion. And as the acknowledged good needs not special remark, the unacknowledged, which is commonly so familiar in aspect as to be viewed with indifference, or even is disguised under the shape of apparent evil, and thus involves so much deliverance of which we are unconscious, will demand much space in the field of this investigation. To Him that brings light out of darkness, and life out of death, be the honour and glory and blessings and thanksgiving from one voice and one heart of a thoughtful people.

We have, therefore, first of all to examine the position and nature of the country, and so to judge how it satisfies the first of the conditions formerly laid down. And here we must, of course, go to God's vast quarry, whence he builds the nations, and look into the pit whence they have been digged. We must examine the primitive state of the land. Having arrived,

therefore, in the course of the forementioned considerations, at the presumption that God proposed to found here a mighty empire, which should bear its part of instrumentality in carrying out his gracious decree that the Gospel should be preached to every creature, we are led to consider its site.

Now, would any minds have ever conjectured it? Would they not have placed it in what they must have considered a much more commanding position? For the old empires, which in their appointed day and unconscious way have done his work, have stood in the centre and highway of the world, on a vast plain, mighty river, or inland sea, which opened thoroughfares of communication on every side. But, on the contrary, he laid the foundation of this on the world's outskirts, beyond the beaten track of its civilization, where it seemed a mystery, as it was indeed a prophecy, to all beholders, who spoke of it in an imposing tale, made up confusedly of fable and fact, on their return home. The traveller who had gone so

far as to reach the western end of the old continent, and looked curiously onward still, saw at first, perhaps, the bare interminable ocean. But the misty curtain drew up, and, looming at the distance of about twenty or thirty miles, was discovered another land, responding with broken white cliffs to the shore on which he was standing, and proclaiming at once its independence and relationship. On crossing the strait, and proceeding westward about two hundred and fifty miles, he came to the sea again, spread out truly into the interminable ocean. He had turned his back on the last of mankind, and there seemed an end to all enterprise of man. Finding it thus blocked up effectually through the whole of its length on the farther side, would he not have jeered at the very suggestion of such a land ever becoming a joyful mother of children, who should make her the seat of empire? Where could be her subjects, unless they were the sea-calves and whales of the deep? And if he caught a view of the Irish mountains, what would they betoken

to him but a repetition, at a far and dangerous distance, of the same lonesome barbarism, prolonged into still more secret recesses of the all-girding ocean ?

Yet some advantages might even then have been discernible, which, in their season and degree, have contributed to that unlooked-for end. It proved sufficiently fertile to become a province, and was even able to afford sufficient plunder to a Roman governor. At one period it even for a short time visibly prefigured its future importance, being made the head-quarters of a part of the divided empire. Its climate, in spite of showers and mists, was healthy ; and its products, as of a country extended through many degrees of latitude, were not only abundant in quantity, but also various in quality. Indeed, its fertility became a strong link in its connection with the neighbouring continent, independently of its subjection to Rome, and enabled it to export sufficient to ensure the importation of all that was needed for comfort, and of much that

could minister to luxury. If it bore not the pomegranate and olive, like Canaan (Deut. viii. 8), yet it was a land like that, of wheat and barley, and its stones were iron, and out of its hills could be dug brass, and even silver and gold (*Tacit. Agric.* 12), while its girding ocean cast up pearls, which were deemed worthy to enter the Roman market, although in very unequal competition with those of the Indian Ocean.

So did it appear to the Roman eye : and such, except that the silver became scarce, and the gold and pearls ceased, it continued to be ; and lay awaiting its high destiny among the nations, like the future great man, perhaps the youngest son in the bosom of a large family, for about fifteen hundred years from the time when the covetous eye of Rome alighted upon her. Then beyond that ocean, which seemed to enfold her in the hem of the impenetrable mystery of the end of the world, was revealed a new continent ; and all at once her position was changed. Instead of

being an outskirt, she became a centre of the world, still more so than even the seats of empire of old. Her people felt at once the promptings of her high calling, and rushed forth in adventurous crowds from her western door, along the briny highway thence opened, and put together the rude elements of that colonial empire, which we have in our generation to maintain, not only for the honour and welfare of our country, but for the glory of God and salvation of mankind.

And now we can see how the hand of God had prepared the material elements of the land of such an inheritance. The moderate magnitude of our island comes first among these. Had it been much greater, like Borneo, there would have been room for more kingdoms than might have been brought into permanent union within the duration of the world. Nor would need of emigration have been felt where so much soil was at command. On the contrary, the danger attending emigration would have been manifest where rival countries lay together

in such secluded neighbourhood, if, indeed, their mutual wars did not cut down the superabundant crop ever as it grew up, and thus effectually prevent all consideration of the matter. Never, therefore, under any circumstances, was it likely to have become adequate to the energy of pouring forth so large a stream of adventurous population, and maintaining so full a well-head from generation to generation, as to become a motherland to a new world. At the same time, its prolonged figure, and its position in the line of north and south, along a peculiar outbreak of rock through the earth's crust, secures for it an advantage denied to countries which are immense in comparison; namely, an abundant outcrop of those rocks which contain, not indeed the most showy, but assuredly the most profitable of minerals, and especially iron, coal, and lime; not only in such plenty, but also in a neighbourhood so close for their necessary combination, as to save a vast expense of transit, and thus to establish the cheapest

rate of furnishing the world from its furnaces and workshops.

The different figure as well as position of Ireland, cutting her off from the enjoyment of such a benefit so nearly, illustrates forcibly the privilege which the hand of God has conferred on Great Britain in this respect. And we may, moreover, advantageously compare it with the lot of New Zealand, which some seem, led by similarity of size and shape, to consider as the future Great Britain of the southern world. Whatever may be the unexplored riches of the new country, they are unlikely to excel those of the old; and its situation at a distance from Australia of twice and a half of that at which Britain lies from the European continent, being akin to that which Ireland would hold to Europe, if Great Britain were not interposed; and, moreover, the want of the fellowship of such an island as Ireland, seem both to proclaim an inferior allotment of rank to her among the positions of the kingdom of the world, be the

fate of the Australian continent what it will.

Again, had it been of a like extent with Ireland, or much less, it had not only been unequal to this abundant mineral supply on which its fortunes so evidently depend, and which a prolongation of form from east to west, instead of from north to south, would have so seriously diminished, but it would hardly have been able to send forth an emigration. That Ireland has so done, and in so plentiful a stream, is owing to her connection with Great Britain, which has maintained her in a long domestic peace, taken her into partnership in her prosperity, thus helped her to rear a large population, and, moreover, supplied her with regions for settlement: and, having furnished her with the beginning and end, left to her but a very short and smooth middle passage.

But, as has been just hinted, could Great Britain have accomplished her high destiny without the neighbourhood of Ireland? Per-

haps hardly any more than our earth could have dispensed with her moon. She has need both of her abundant and vigorous population and of her large and secure havens, to say nothing of some change derived by our climate from such a shield against the moisture of the Atlantic, and consequent useful variety of produce in the two countries. And thus, again, we see the work of the Lord's hand in the configuration of the land of our domestic empire. We shall, in the course of this treatise, have to see it again revealed in bridging that separation which would so naturally produce political difference, and be fatal to the permanent prosperity, if not independence, of both countries. God hath joined them together. May he never suffer man to put them asunder.

So far we have ventured to see into the Lord's counsels, as to the material foundation of the greatness of the British Empire. As usual, their beginning seems contrary to their end. What seemed to lie in the circumference has been found to lie in the centre. What

might have been situated far away, as are many wide countries, from the earth's mineral seam, is intersected by it. What might have been too large or too small is of the suitable magnitude. What might have been defective through solitude has been perfected by giving a companion. Such combinations should remind us of the hand of a combiner, and especially when we come to see, as we shortly shall, that a peculiar population with peculiar fortunes was necessary to perfect them, and point them in one sum towards their high purpose. That population might have been, like almost all other, destitute of a spirit of enterprise, and therefore, besides remaining small, have remained rude, and unequal also even to the discovery of the hidden riches of the soil. And, indeed, it must be confessed, that hardly a century has elapsed since that discovery has been effectually made.

Having received so satisfactory an answer to the first of the proposed conditions concerning our country, let us offer our first fruits of

thanksgiving to Him “who taketh up the isles as a very little thing” (Isai. xl. 12), and with a heart thus enlarged, and head thus enlightened, proceed to survey the successive steps of this preparation in securing the remaining conditions.

CHAPTER IV.

On the Character of its Population.

THE second condition now takes its turn for consideration. Thus far reviewed, all had been mere body apart from mind, and matter uninformed with spirit. But we shall find the grand link of God's providential arrangement immediately upon entering upon the question with which this is concerned, and observing that to the combination of the forementioned natural qualities of the country has been added a favourable combination of peculiar qualities in the character of the population. For surely it was no common crowd, no vulgar herd of chance-comers. Though a mixture, it was well wrought by time and circumstance into a nation of decided character, so as to be able to make the most of their position.

Some, indeed, are apt to speak contemptuously of a mongrel population. But they can have little studied history. It must be confessed that the people whom God chose for instruments of carrying out his predetermined counsel of redeeming man, was of the purest stock possible, and was all along most rigorously guarded against all foreign mixture. But the reason is evident. He chose them for the reception and transmission of certain specific heavenly communications in the utmost purity, from the first generation to the last, through a long period of time. Therefore he framed their language, their laws, their rites, their customs, so as to admit of as little change as possible. And such a condition as this none but a homogeneous people could fulfil. Yet even the privilege of their high calling was not allowed to be enjoyed so far as to exempt them from the infirmities natural to such an inbred state; and the multitude of ceremonial observances respecting the purity of the body were perhaps not only in themselves acts of religious

discipline, but also by the way correctives to diseases incidental to the long continuance of a state of inter-marriage. And we may not be far wrong if we think to discern in the childish mixture of fickleness with obstinacy, which strikes us so much in their general history, the peculiar infirmity of a people deriving exclusively from their native resources. The ancient and glorious exceptions seen in kings, priests, and prophets, only serve to bring it out more clearly by stronger contrast, and attest the hand of God working extraordinarily among them. The end to which a people of pure stock will come, unless the hand of God shall specially interfere to correct the derangement, is proved by the gross superstition of ancient Egypt, the stationary civilization of the Chinese, and the degeneracy of such nations everywhere. But in a mixture of stocks there is a mixture of influences which counterbalance and correct each other, tempering all to a general good, both as to body and as to mind. Defects even great, yet meeting

with opposite, tend to form a golden mean. Both the Greek and the Roman were a mongrel people. Such also was destined to be the people of this island. And the hand of God is visible in the extraordinary manner in which its different parts were brought together to form one peculiar whole.

That manner was a consequence of the extraordinary position which He had assigned to the country in the extreme west at the end of the habitable world. At first sight it would seem a spot of hopeless remoteness from the throng of the nations, most unlikely to attract attention as long as the continent could supply room, which it has never yet failed to do. But a living stream set in towards it from the first day that man moved from the plain of Shinar, and in his rolling flood of increase the various nations were impelled, one on the track of another, towards our western regions. They who arrived here must have been either men of adventurous enterprise, who would of themselves ever go still farther forward, or, at least,

men disciplined by sharp and long contention with those who had succeeded in pushing them forward, and must have been much benefited by the struggle. Thus there must have been sterling elements in the character of all the immigrant bodies.

And now commenced an operation which on the continent could have been but rare indeed, but here was absolutely necessary. So does the design of the Lord unfold itself. Each accession at one end, not being answered, as so generally there, by a departure at the other, brought, as it were, a fresh living layer to be jammed against those which had been already laid, and by its rude compressing force to break both them and itself, and so become mixed with them, and by the internal convulsions thus produced, to enter into intimate combination. Thus the Teutonic element of our people, which followed the Celtic from the East at a long interval, tempered with a phlegmatic stability of character the impulsive flexibility of its predecessor. And from

the day of their first compression the change has been going on, through increased facility of communication being added to the effect of time. All that ever existed in these islands has been long continually blending into one mass. The Gael, the Cymro, the Saxon, the Dane, the Norman, have all been lords on the soil in their turn, and now hold it, not like the Turk and Greek, or the Magyar and Slave—one party in subjection to another—but in simultaneous joint and equal possession, as one embodied lord with one mind and one spirit. And a national character, with indeed provincial differences, even as a national language with provincial dialect, has been established, recognized, and respected throughout the whole wide world.

Compare us now with the pure Celt as he exists in the West of Ireland, and with the pure Angle as he exists in the North-west of Germany, and you will appreciate the value of [the combination. Or let us take again the case of what might have happened.

Suppose a Slavonian emigration to have had the start of the Teutonic, and found its way hither instead. How different would have been the result. So far from improving the Celtic character by combination, it would have added most fatally to its defects. The portion of the world's history which each has achieved, or rather failed to achieve, seems strongly to confirm this conclusion. Was not then the Lord's election displayed in bringing such elements together? "He hissed unto the nations from the end of the earth," and they came in the order prescribed.—(Isai. v. 26.)

Thus Briton, Saxon and Dane had been mingled on the soil. But much was yet wanting to blend them, even into one body, much more into one mind; and the Anglo-Saxon (as it is now the fashion to term him), having been called to the predominance, proved as unequal as the Briton to the charge of maintaining a people in unity at home, and in safety from abroad. So now the hand of the Lord was to be stretched forth for

introducing one more element, which should be so decidedly superior in weight of influence, as at once to compress what had been loose, and give point to that which had been aimless. Naturally unready, however wilful, the Anglo-Saxon had not only been distracted at home, but invaded from abroad, and been so pressed as even to yield the sovereignty of the country to the Dane, and a series of calamities arising from desolating invasions, disputed successions, and ecclesiastical interference, had disintegrated the moral and political body of the nation, and rubbing out the finer and fairer parts of its character, left but the rough and rude. Thus its spirit of wilfulness and unreadiness took to itself in addition a spirit of grossness and superstition, and it became so debased from its standard of native truthfulness, as to come to the extreme of a deed of cowardly treachery, which stands out among atrocious national crimes of bloodshed. On the eve of a religious festival, making a fit precedent for the mas-

sacres of the Sicilian Vespers, and of St. Bartholomew, it committed a general slaughter of the Danes, who were living with confident harmony in the bosom of the nation. Of course from such a moment this people forfeited its position. God gave the Saxon up to flounder in the mire of his difficulties without discernment, without energy, without conscience, without a ruling mind, and his sceptre was transferred to the Dane, and allowed to be recovered only that he might have time to reveal the judgment of the Almighty more visibly still in handing it over on the fatal field of Hastings to the Norman.

The hand of the Lord brought that stranger hither indeed. Worse consequences would have followed the delay of his arrival. England's continual state of confusion, which showed so plainly how she had been left by God destitute of all help to be derived from the energy of a ruling mind, and from the firmness of hand which is to be found in an undisputed claim to sovereignty, must in no

long time have invited a Norman invasion, and induced a Norman conquest. So much previous suffering and degradation was therefore cut short, and the pangs of a slower, but not less sure contest, were reduced to a moment of sharp agony, under the infliction of a hand which directed an overwhelming military force with such power and skill as rendered further resistance hopeless, and crushed down in a short time every crest of rebellion. To a thoughtful mind, wont to go for causes to the heavenly fountainhead, this crisis is full of deep interest, and therefore demands more particular notice.

The Christian will ever keep his eye upon the great Head of his Church, who was manifested that He might destroy the works of the devil. He regards, therefore, all evil which passes over the region of his Lord's visible dominion as already pregnant with the causes of its own dissolution, and prepared to give birth to a progeny of good. Instead of impatiently accepting it as evil, he digs as it

were, into it, as through brackish sand, to find fresh springs of the sweet waters of comfort. Where, indeed, for him had England been without such evil? It is one of those stages through which a people which claims God for its guide confesses with thankfulness to have passed, as it expects, with faith and hope, further stages through which to pass still. He has begun his knowledge of his Lord's ways in that of the history of his ancient chosen people, and adding to it experience, he concludes that after the Lord has chosen his servants, and impressed on them the form of peculiarity requisite for their designed service, He puts them into the furnace of trial, and forges his instruments in the course of the very use of them. There they seem for a time consumed to our eyes. But thence He brings them out again before us, tests and contunds them with heavy blows of adversity, and is elaborately welding them, while we expect every moment to see them annihilated under his strokes. Then He plunges

them into the waters of affliction, and again we think that we have lost sight of them for ever. But He brings them forth thence also steeled to endure hardness, and then gives them edge and polish by grinding them in conflict with one another, and against neighbouring nations, until they shall have become fit for the service which, in his all-wise sovereignty, He has designed for them. And ever, thenceforward, as their edge of energy grows blunt, He remands them to the rough experience of his file. Let such be the view of our minds, and in such a spirit let us put up the thankful and hopeful prayer of our hearts, as we examine the order of what may be called the adversities of England, amongst which this conquest is generally placed first and worst on the list.

Even on considering this so-called evil by itself, without casting a look beyond, we may discover in it much good. If the Saxon was thus subjected to a grinding tyranny, he was also delivered from the unceasing calamities caused by civil discord and foreign invasion.

The throne, being unassailable, secured firm and regular government. The Dane never visited his shores with fire and sword again. If the note of the curfew insultingly constrained him to his home in the evening, it also wholesomely restrained him from the loose debauch to which he was wont too often to devote its solemn hours. If he was forced to submit to a foreign priesthood, he found in it a protection which his native had never been able to give, and was put under the direction of a fresh and superior mind. And, if we look beyond, the good is both evident and excellent.

The Lord chose out for him by far the best teacher of his day. For the Norman seems to have received the commission of infusing fresh life into all the people among whom he came, and both wild Russia, and long-tamed Italy experienced his beneficial influence. At this day our country testifies to a larger mind, and grander design having framed our edifices, both material and moral.

A solid stateliness marks all the monuments of his period, and raises in our minds no slight admiration of his magnificent conception, when we contemplate his cathedrals and abbeys, which are proudly overlooking the flimsy and formless edifices with which modern generations have surrounded them. Even Magna Charta also, however it may be reckoned a sanction of recovered Saxon rights, was mainly the work of the Norman aristocracy. There was, therefore, anything but an eventual loss, however there might have been a temporary disgrace, in having been sent to school, and set to be taught by such a people.

The discipline was indeed severe, and of long continuance. But so willed the Lord, who had of old put his own chosen people under a similar course. And his hand is manifest in establishing a continuous succession of three able and sturdy sovereigns, whose vigorous arm prevented every attempt of their subjects at insurrection, after the last throes of their short though sharp resistance to sub-

jugation were over. He put it into the heart of the Conqueror to hand down his English sceptre to his second son, and pass over Robert, whose government of Normandy shows what a terrible calamity would have been his of England, where it must have encouraged an insurrection, which would most probably have crushed the Englishman under a still less tolerable oppression, and, at any rate, have put an end to that steady course of chastisement which was amending the debased part of his character, and preparing it to take that place which it now holds. Deep as the Lord had plunged him in a dungeon of darkness, so slowly and surely He brought light to his eyes again in graciously considerate mercy.

After a weary century had past, a ray of cheering light was vouchsafed to him in the accession of Henry II., who bore in his veins one-eighth of the royal Saxon blood of the sister of Edgar Atheling, and was, therefore, fondly regarded as the restorer of the ancient line of his native kings. It was the more

cheering on account of the gloomy forebodings of treatment of the English when they should come under the sceptre of his uncle William. But amid the first tokens of a determination to trample the English lower down still in the mire, and sink them for ever, his breathings of slaughter were stopped short, and his fire of vengeance quenched in the waters of the sea. Thus, in his providence, our nation's God makes his angels winds, and a wind delivered England from the approach of the tyranny of a presumptive William III., as a wind also, about five centuries after, delivered her from tyranny by favouring the approach to our shores of the ships of an acknowledged William III.

At last, after three inferior kings had relaxed the tightness of the bondage, and Edward I.—one of the ablest men that ever came to a throne, approving himself legislator no less than monarch—had adjusted its pressure, and the Norman himself had been brought under it, and shared it with him, the work of the terrible forge was over, the national character

emerged, and instead of the ignorant and mischievous Saxon boy we behold the disciplined and patriotic English man. The whole of the old population, once presenting the motley aspect of Briton, Saxon, Dane, Norman, presents itself as one new man, risen in one purged and amended spirit to life, and light, and liberty, and order. The native, uninventive doggedness which would fight, but not foresee, has been refined to an enterprising and enduring spirit, which eventually fitted him not only for maintaining the inviolability of his native soil, but also for exploring distant shores, acquiring foreign dominion (instead of losing his own), and executing God's work in a more extensive service than has ever yet been imposed on a nation. His native truthfulness of heart burst forth from the heap of oppression which was intended to stifle it, and on the fields of Cressy and Agincourt ministered to that truthfulness of eye which sent his arrow forth with such ensurance of victory.

About two centuries had indeed still to elapse

from that former day of his glory, before his restoration could be pronounced complete. It then received its final stamp from the reformation of his church. But even by the time of Edward III. his language had supplanted that of the foreigner, uttered song in a strain which Greece and Rome would not have disdained to hear, and had become strong and clear enough for proclaiming the living word of Christ to listening multitudes, as it has never since ceased to do under every sun until this day. The genuine and high English character thus unfolded itself daily, displaying continually more manifestly that mixture of original talent with plain common sense, of cool judgment with daring spirit, of forbearance with courage, of gentleness with hardihood, which has ever since marked the leading characters of England.

And was all this England's own doing, or was it the effect of the ordinary working of second causes? It was, if a man can regenerate himself by his own moral and spiritual power, or the world can amend the world. It

was, if such a number of secondary causes, working into one another in a particular succession without a break, proclaimed not the choice of a first cause ; and if a solitary and glaring exception from the common lot did not denote uncommon agency. Where shall we look for a similar example ? That of the people of Israel, in rising from their long oppression under the Canaanites to their supremacy in the land under David and Solomon, was the acknowledged effect of divine agency. Their restoration from the Babylonish captivity, if one in a worldly sense so imperfect could be a parallel, was still more openly such. And where is another to be found ? Greece has recovered from her Turkish bondage, but where is her moral, if we should even concede her political, regeneration ? Can we, indeed, yet call her at all a nation ? And others have made, and some—as Poland and Italy—are attempting to make all at once new creatures of themselves. But we know what has been, and can guess what will be the success, wherever man's will and

might only have been regarded, and God's government of his world left out of consideration ; where admission into the class of the kingdoms of this world has been the darling object of the heart, and a portion in the kingdom of Heaven has never had even its belief, much less its desire.

Where else, indeed, is to be found a whole people which was put under a grinding oppression, that endured so long as to threaten extinction, and yet, like the cinders which the Saxon housewife, warned by the curfew-bell, covered up and compressed by laying on them the weight at night, retained a secret fire alive at the core against the morning of regeneration ? God, and not man, was that housewife here. He adjusted the pressure so as to concentrate the national spirit, and not extinguish it. Thus He kept it alive, though smouldering, through a long night of darkness, and prevented the peril of its immaturely bursting forth into irregular and ill-sustained flashes, which might invite easy and utter extinction.

Having collected and tempered it, He brought it forth at last, not rending its way with noise and shock, but manifesting itself in a steady light and salutary heat, which gently dispelled the darkness and revived the dead, and is still working its blessed effects in the English heart after five centuries. Surely, if the Lord's hand be anywhere discernible, it is here. Surely the same hand that made England's sun in the sky has made England's glory among the nations. Look and look again into this article of our history, and see how the detail assumes a peculiar cast, follows a peculiar line of succession, forms singular clusters of combination, until it fills the reverent mind with the conviction that the Lord's hand has done all, and draws from it the joyful cry of the thankful believer, "The Lord He is God; the Lord He is God."

Hitherto we have seen how far our country has satisfied the two first conditions necessary to the privilege of being an instrument of evangelization to the world. We have yet

something to say concerning her education under later influences ; but this point, though it may come logically next in order, yet, historically, were better deferred until we have gone into some examination of the manner in which she has fulfilled the third.

CHAPTER V.

*On our Deliverance from the Dangers of
Annexation.*

THE field of view is now opening far and wide, and becomes crowded with a variety of objects, while the scene is shifted from home to abroad and from abroad to home again, with many and rapid alternations, like those which so much interest us in Shakspeare's trilogy of Henry VI., itself a lively representation of a characteristic period of our history. It is, however, but a prelude to an exhibition of striking grandeur; the scene shifting from London to Paris is but the first remove of those which are now made from London to Calcutta, from the Forelands to African and Asiatic capes. England is beginning to go from home, learn her position, and make account of her domestic education.

But this very spirit, so unfavourable to her seclusion, seems, at first sight, adverse to her fulfilment of the third condition. It is true that her insular independence had been lost by her annexation to Normandy; nor would it have served her true interest at all on this head if such changes as sometimes befall united nations had befallen us, and her annexation to Normandy had become the annexation of Normandy to her. The name of England would then never have appeared upon the list of those countries which possess the further requisite conditions for God's destined service. And thus in either case Normandy, whether kingdom or province, would have inflicted upon her the very deepest of national calamities.

But, God be thanked, all such loss as Normandy thus threatened to bring resulted but in manifest gain. Throughout his gracious dispensation to sinful man He, in his very checking, is speeding, and, as the chemist refines his drug by passing it through a preparation, so He makes his gifts to pass through

the evil of this world on their way to his favoured people, so that the evil, which they as creatures of this world enfold, may be drawn out and left behind, and they may arise strained to good, as far as this lower imperfect state will allow. And the heart of a true servant will but thank Him for the good so much the more from the remembrance of the evil through which he has attained it. How, then, was this country brought to fulfil the third condition ?

Anglo-Saxon dominion had shut up England more exclusively than ever into herself. It, however, worked with the one-sided operation of a valve, freely letting in the Danish stranger for the devastation of the country, while it hindered the commerce which led the native out for instruction and improvement. Thus it increased twofold the misery and ignorance of the people. In its latter days, England had, indeed, some communication with Normandy, whose clever, ambitious princes thus both got sight of the pleasantness and espied the nakedness of the land. We thenceforward begin to

read its doom. They were not likely to take their covetous eyes away, and not avail themselves of the opportunity which their position and means gave them for gaining so valuable and so attainable a prize. And even supposing that it had discerned the peril of communication with so active, politic, and powerful a neighbour, and had shut the door against him, yet we must then have been effectually excluded from the continent, of which that province was, to England, the doorway; and, being thus debarred from all the civilizing influences of neighbourhood, the nation must have returned, with much aggravation, into her former barbarous state—fallen back into her old chronic disease of intestine division, and thus invited a Norman invasion, and undergone, most probably, a Norman conquest after all. We have seen how mercifully God timed such an event, so that a decisive front of adversity should be followed by a rear of unquestionable prosperity, such as never had been enjoyed in this island before.

Proceeding on this course, the Lord's hand having opened the door for the Norman to bring in with him the elements necessary to its future expansion and greatness, shut it again upon him, after that the nation could no longer endure the drain from her wealth and strength which answered to that import. Having given a succession of able and resolute kings, who effectually had done the stern work assigned to them, he raised up the weak and wicked John to his assigned part, and condemned him to lose Normandy after an union of one hundred and fifty years. Thus the great barons who had lived in Normandy on funds furnished by English estates, were shortly compelled to settle among the English, became English, and the nation began to present the spectacle, hitherto so strange in this island, of different bloods united under one spirit, one people, one speech.

Thus, bad elements having been expelled, and good left to ferment into action, England entered fairly upon the destiny to which God,

through an apparently overwhelming calamity, had called her. To that service it was absolutely necessary that she should be quite independent of the continent, so that she should have her own policy, be national beyond all other people, and thus attain to that concentration of moral strength which alone can enable a people to go forth and forget their fathers' home, to found colonies, and give the law to wide and distant regions, while it overflows in numbers without exhaustion, and extends dominion without central weakness. She became, in a certain high sense, another Israel. And as Israel of old had his boundaries within which he was strong, as serving the Lord, and beyond he was weak, as serving himself, so also, if England had persisted in retaining but a few square miles of her old continental ground—even so little as Calais and its territory—that would have been enough to change her whole system, and alter her whole history. The very maintenance of that ground must have compelled its extension, therefore involved

her intimately in continental politics, and therefore have persuaded her to relinquish a charge of such glory as no people on earth has ever yet received, and to abandon the exalted and enduring station of a service of civilization, and of a ministry of evangelization, of a conversion of the kingdoms of this world into the kingdom of our Lord, and his Christ ; in short, her means and earnest of life, in barter for an uncertain dominion over that which, in comparative extent, could not be called a province, and in comparative value was of course mere dust.

And yet the hand of God, after it had been stretched forth to mark this her European boundary, did not positively restrain her within it, but left her loose for a considerable period, to indulge that expansion of her growing stature, and to have that communication with other states which her proper education required. How narrow, during this interval, were her escapes from being annexed to the annexations of her kings ; for, just before

this separation, the first Plantagenet had, by inheritance and marriage, become possessor of more than one half of France, and might have anticipated Henry V. in obtaining the whole, had he not been held back by the troubles arising out of domestic contention. How little could he have dreamed that a cowardly son would forfeit the whole of so splendid an inheritance. But enough was afterwards recovered to cause continual embroilment of England with France for upwards of three centuries to come, and more than once it seemed as if England's lot was, after all, to form part of a continental kingdom. The first attempt of her kings upon the prize of the crown of France all but succeeded under Edward III. The second, for a time, fully succeeded under Henry V. Thanks be to the Lord that it was but for a time, otherwise the ruin of our country, spiritual and temporal, must have ensued, and there would have been brought to pass again, but with far more manifest detriment, the event of the conqueror becoming

captive to the conquered.—(*Hor.* 2 Ep. I., 156.) Not only would France have become the frontier towards Europe, and therefore have embroiled England in all her quarrels, and required the continual residence of the king, but the English nobles also would have received estates there, and left this country to reside upon them, both in order to render the tenure more secure, and also to be at hand for military duty.

To this necessity would have been added the strong persuasion of France, through her superior attractions. The bright sun, the clear sky of the country, the joyous and beautiful Paris, the chivalric courteousness of a high and numerous nobility, the social habits and polished manners of the people, the dazzling presence of royalty—all these would exact from them a preference to our foggy air and dim sun, to our plain and dingy London, to our train of nobility reduced to a mere band of resident officials, to our reserved manners and domestic habits, to the provincial court of our lord-

lieutenant. Meanwhile, they that were left at home would have shared the expense of an enormous and continual drain of money sent from the estates of the absentees, while the superior industry and patience of the country would have ensured for England a most unfair share of the burden of taxation. She would also have been dragged through all the miserable crimes, and subjected to all the heavy judgments of that restless and unscrupulous people, who, while they made free use of us for their own purposes, never could have loved us, but rather hated us in proportion to our real service, for that would be in proportion to what remained of the independence of our national spirit. We should have been felt as a heavy drag upon their light, ambitious spirit, and it would soon have become the continual aim of the policy of a Frenchified king, and a Frenchified nobility, to destroy our constitution and suppress our independence. And when the time of the Reformation had come (if indeed, in such a case, it ever could have come), her

large majority, added to the same party here, must have quashed every attempt to introduce it; and if deeds of persecution, such as the massacre of St. Bartholomew, or the fires of Smithfield, should have been undertaken, our countrymen would have had to endure the misery, not of one, but of both.

Unreflecting and prejudiced persons may, perhaps, argue in this as in other cases, and maintain that Englishmen are of too strong a will and too firm a character to be thus tamed down into servility. Yet we may see what an effect a long residence in France can have upon the hardness of our national character. As the arts of her kitchens can reduce the toughest and most tasteless meat to tender and savoury food, so the arts of her drawing-rooms can relax the hardest and gravest character to softness and frivolity. Our cavaliers, with Charles II. at their head, lost the strengthening uses of adversity under her enervating influence. Any struggle to keep pace with her on this point would only have left us

behind in the second place, while she would have been enriched at our expense, and would have thought plain, industrious England well rewarded and bound to be content with the honour of being Cinderella to her idle, gay, and accomplished sister.

Such had been the lightest penalty paid for our transgression of the limits of our insular dominion. And that our exemption from it was no work of our own hands, or even thought of our own hearts, but that we had hand and heart in the contrary direction, and even heart earnest long after hand had become impotent, is but too manifest. England poured forth profusely treasure and armies, gold and blood, to second the wild ambition of her Edward and Henry. She was deeply grieved at the loss of Normandy, still more at being deprived of the inheritance of the Plantagenets, and more still at being stripped of the crown of France; and the pang of the unclasping of her last grasp from continental soil, in the loss of Calais, broke a monarch's heart, and over-

whelmed the nation with indignation, fear, and shame. How different were the feelings with which, about a quarter of a century ago, the nation hailed the severance of all territorial connexion with the continent, when the time arrived for the removal of Hanover from our Sovereign's dominions. We had become a wiser, but surely not a sadder people upon this question of our national policy.

Let then every mouth confess that it is God that hath made us, and not we ourselves. At last our counsels are in accordance with his. Oh, that such accordance had come from faith in Him, from obedience to his direction, discerned through the quickness of a thankfully inquiring spirit. Nevertheless, it took a long time of perilous experience, and of painful discipline, to convince us of the wisdom of this policy. So little are his ways our ways. And so great was his merciful consideration for us. For amid the height of our ambitious visions of empire He was preparing for us a destiny of which we had little dreamed. So at the

hottest fit of our madness He said, "It shall not prosper. I will take away from you the mighty man and the man of war . . . and I will give children to be your princes, and babes shall rule over you."—(Isai. iii. 4.) Accordingly, He took away from Edward III. his mental and physical energy, deprived him of his valiant son, compelled him to an inglorious peace with France, which left him but a remnant of his foreign domain, and assigned the succession of his throne to a child eleven years old, who grew up to manhood but to fall before an usurper. And he cut off Henry V. in the flower of his age, almost as soon as he had grasped the coveted crown, and leaving for heir a child of the age of but nine months, and of a character so imbecile as to lose both thrones, involving England in a civil war, which diverted all her attention to herself until the prize of the French crown had, in all reasonable hope, escaped from her reach for ever.

Yet still she could not make up her mind to believe that the loss was irremediable, nor

become sobered and reasonable enough to abandon all hopes of continental dominion. The whole nation shouted in the train of her youthful king Henry VIII. when, with a gallant army, he sallied forth to recover the inheritance of his ancestors the Dukes of Normandy and the Plantagenets. But the Lord's hand soon put out this blaze of vanity, and raised on the other side a fiery spirit and haughty answer, which showed the entire change which had taken place. It retorted with the threat of invading England. Henry's irruption was the last flicker of a light which was finally extinguished in the loss of Calais under one daughter, and before the reign of another had ended the nation was able to say, after a struggle of four hundred years, to the King of kings, "Thy will be done. Blessed be thy name for what Thou hast taken away, no less than for what Thou hast given."

But England had now grown up nearly into the fulness of manhood, and her continental communication had through much trial brought

forth for her good fruit. Her education for good government was completed, and she was henceforward not abroad at school, learning her lesson, but resident in the discharge of the duties of her station, and improving by experience at home. Her foreign relation was no longer that of warlike aggression, which had hitherto been its more ostensible character, but of a nature more accordant with her riper years—one of commerce and peace. That ruder mode, however, had been a powerful instrument of bringing her to a more gentle. Engaging her with France in arms, it led to engaging her with France in arts and literature, and through France with Italy, which had lately produced the two earliest great poets of modern Europe, Dante and Petrarch, the latter of whom might have been seen in person by Chaucer the father of our literature, whose song was heard between the clangor of the trumpets of Poitiers and Agincourt. Thus arms introduced arts, and the severance of Calais marked the period when England needed

no longer to sally forth as a robber, and acquire the fruits of peace through violence, but found it her business to stay at home, and keep open such passages as may admit of her seeking and finding, and being sought and found, to mutual advantage.

But notwithstanding these changes of circumstance, would she so readily have reverted her eye from Calais, had no other object come into the field of view? Most probably not. But the Lord had now raised her up into a state of preparation for taking a lasting part, and ultimately by far the most important in an event which He was bringing upon the nations of Europe. He was about to unveil a mystery which had been hidden from our Old World before history began; and to introduce such a change as had never befallen the whole world since the earth was peopled by Noah. All at once there arose out of the sea before the eyes of the maritime powers the form of a new continent, brilliant with crowns of new kingdoms of untold extent

and fabulous wealth. Thenceforward England no longer looked in her old landlocked direction. She turned away from the familiar east, for her western ports became all at once of much more interest for her than the rivals of Calais and Havre, Dover and Southampton, had been for ages on her eastern. They were the gates to a new continent, and the formerly illimitable ocean, disclosing its limits, became a highway thither for her adventurous sons, who freely went forth, until in about half a century after the loss of Calais, she had set her foot of colonization upon the soil of Virginia, and had begun that career of civilization and evangelization in lands on the other side of the earth from which she has never ceased, and we should pray that she never may cease: for it is the course of her mission, it is the path of her safety.

Blessed, therefore, be the Lord God of England, for He hath done for us marvellous great things. We were annexed as a province, and He has made us an annexer of provinces;

we were servants, and He raised us up to be masters, having taught us thus a round of duties which no nation but ourselves has understood, and put us into a school of such exact and elevating discipline, as alone could have enabled us to fulfil them. He dispersed the dangers naturally attending such minority, and thus, in the end, from a small, weak, ignorant, divided people, fixed on a petty island, which seemed broken off like a jagged fragment from the neighbouring continent, or like a boat parted from its ship, has brought us to be fathers, teachers, rulers, to many nations, and some yet to be born, throned on the seat of an empire which occupies one seventh of the habitable globe at this day. How little could our fathers have understood the great end to which they were working. As well may the worms, that through ages build the coral reef, think of the living souls which shall hereafter have their abode upon it. But shall we love and honour them the less? They strove hard with heart and hand

to leave a goodly inheritance to their children ; and God has crowned their struggle with such an one as they never could have conceived for its richness.

Therefore be given all due honour to such agents, who sowed so tearfully, that we might reap so joyfully. Therefore, let us, in our appointed place of succession, also endeavour to bequeath a patrimony more glorious still, as workmen in a higher department, and with more effectual instruments still. Therefore let all the earth resound with our song of thanksgiving, poured forth not only in words, which millions of our subjects cannot understand, but in works of Christian wisdom, truth and love, which all, from Hindoo to Indian, can understand, and glorify God for the great work which He hath done.

CHAPTER VI.

On God's Education of England for Colonial Empire.

WE have now reached the proper place whence to contemplate the subject of England's education, as especially conducted by her Lord God, for fitting her for a mistress of colonial empire. This is intimately connected with the bearing of the fourth and last of the conditions formerly laid down for such a case, inasmuch as we are set down to examine the singular character and peculiar succession of the events of English History. These disclose the lesson which she had to learn, showing the steps by which we have ascended to the station of colonial empire, where our country is enthroned so conspicuously in the face of the whole world, challenging its inquiry

into her history, provoking from learned and unlearned such comments and comparisons as national envy and jealousy, political and religious bias, philosophical speculation and study, may suggest on the spectacle of such historical strangeness, and on the impression made by such an unusual power of this world. Some may be excited to the application of prophecy. All these considerations we may leave to their propounders, thankfully content as we are in remarking that the hand of God must have been stretched out to us full of peculiar gifts, his voice must have spoken to us with peculiar calls, that we should receive so peculiar endowment, and appropriate to ourselves so much larger a portion of this world's territory, and be proclaimed the winners of the prize of colonial empire, for which we began the race in competition with so many and so strong, and with the disadvantage moreover of having made the latest start.

France had not foregone in any degree her valour in the field, nor fallen short of her

talent in the council, nor cooled in her fiery concupiscence, nor slackened in her restless lust of worldly glory. Spain retained her tiger-like determination, and scrupled not at any deed of treachery or cruelty which might prevent the escape of her prey. Portugal proceeded to rule with her wonted steadiness of purpose. Holland began her course of native dogged selfishness, studiously keeping to her own use all that she could lay her hands on, destroying whatever she could not use, but others might ; and, as bred up under Spain in evil days, sparing neither craft nor force against every appearance of a rival. And yet all ultimately failed before the undesigning and aimless advance of England. She went on, generally finding what she never had sought, and owed to an afterthought, as it were, her richest possessions. They came by arms, by which, indeed, she retained them, and not by arts, by which, however, she established them. In short, she had even stumbled in her first stepping on the new continent,

though it proved to be such a stumble as that which William the Conqueror had made on her shore, proving an omen of her grasp of the land for a lasting possession. Her first colonization—that of Virginia—was a failure; and her first establishment in North America was on the Dutch foundation of New York. She received her only remaining—though now splendid—possession of Canada on the same soil, almost within our own time, from the French. Jamaica, once the glory of the West Indies, was ravished from the hands of Spain by Cromwell. South Africa has, in our own days, been gained by conquest from the Dutch, and her acquirement of India has been made within all but the last century through victories won by generals, and annexations made by governors, against the declared policy and wishes of the authorities at home. Our Australian settlements have been almost entirely the result of private enterprise, and not of national policy, and mostly within the lifetime of this generation. Who, on the view of her

mighty empire at this day, could have argued less than the most subtilely conceived and steadily prosecuted design of English policy from generation to generation.

And so Europe has continued to argue. Seeing through a haze raised by her dense prejudice, and careless ignorance of our inner life, and moral and political constitution, and her immense distance from the scenes of action, which, to minds in France and in the centre of Europe, are not more practically real than they were two thousand years ago, she has quite misunderstood, and as consistently misrepresented, our position. She has imputed to deep and selfish policy what were often the heedless works, if not utter blunders, of our simplicity ; reckoned for wanton, ambitious acts of offence, wars to which we were driven in our self-defence, on a soil which never has allowed, nor is ever likely to allow, any power within it to be quiet until it shall have become master of the whole. But only so much the more are we bound to glorify God, who has

Himself so thoroughly done all for England, that the whole world is wondering at her, imputing unimagined and unimaginable designs to her, and supposing that, of course, she had been rather the first to start, instead of being so decidedly the last, as even to have closed the sixteenth century—that era so glorious in the colonial annals of Spain and Portugal—without having established any settlement that deserved the name of a colony.

Such considerations imperatively remand us to an accurate retrospect of our history. It is not the Lord's way, when He has been found of them that sought Him not, to have left them without the means of finding; and, therefore, He must have been peculiarly preparing England with talents for a stewardship which she was so dull in estimating, and so slow in accepting. These He must accordingly have laid deep in her national character and political constitution. But they required time to unfold themselves into action. English institutions were not to be set to extraordinary

work—and such is all foreign—before they had attained a mature and fixed form. Spain and France had begun their race before their institutions were consolidated (and, therefore, they never have been), and before their national character had attained steadiness (and so it never has). Therefore, like all younglings put to the work of full growth, after having made an impetuous start, they fainted and stopped in their career. But England was kept back until she had reached her proper standard of stature and strength. She could, therefore, once started, maintain the race with unabated vigour, with full supplies from a rare husbandry of resources, in well-founded hopefulness. She has, therefore, long passed them by, and while they are even come to a stand, is advancing more vigorously than ever on her course. She may, indeed, have followed rather implicitly the line of circumstances, and so incurred the charge of the want of an original mind. But she has met and handled each incident with the exercise

of a rare sagacity in turning it to account, and used a wise consideration in giving it the proper place in her manifold counsels, and a firm determination in keeping it fixed among her plans. Much which concerns this point has already been examined, and referred to the divine counsel. But much still remains to challenge inquiry. Let us begin with comparing the condition in which other nations came to the same crisis.

The France of the sixteenth century was mostly composed of provinces which had been under almost independent sovereigns, and therefore its population had not been brought up in one school, nor moulded into one spirit of affection and respect towards one common central government. Even down to the end of the eighteenth century some spirit of jealousy, both of each other and of the government, survived, and their differences did not entirely cease, notwithstanding a careful policy of centralization, until they had been all melted down together in the fiery furnace of the Revolution.

Spain, also, had hardly succeeded in uniting three independent monarchies, one of them most discordant in its elements from the other two. Therefore, her condition was destitute of truly national proportion and compactness, and her institutions, merely agglomerated, not conglomerated, were in a state of barbarous rudeness and want of proper connection, as they are at this day. Even the action of the fiery furnace of the French occupation of her soil for several years during the early part of this century has failed to recast her into a proper mould; and she is essentially in the same condition at this hour as she was three centuries ago—no wiser, no better, except so far as such length of time and changes of events must make impression on the most impassive materials.

But such fiery furnace had been lighted for England seven centuries earlier, when by the merciful providence of God all the nation, after having been in imminent hazard of division under chieftains owing but nominal

obedience to the king, was subjected by the Norman in one mass to one general probation, the intensity and duration of which was much augmented by our insular position. The result has been the combination of all English minds into one character, which is honourably distinguished by a continual reference to the internal welfare of the country as to its substance. This comes home to them; while up to this very day the Frenchman looks much more to the showy and external part, as it may strike foreigners, and is kept in continual domestic disquiet by the childish preference. The Spaniard, again, with all his proverbial pride, has never acquired that true self-possession which the consciousness of the real interests of our country inspires, nor, with all his gravity, any base of that steadiness which can result only from the habit of acting on that consciousness. It has been to him a cause of inactivity.

But the Englishman's mind is one of manly patience, of mutual confidence, of practical

views, of reverence for institutions, so that he looks upon law not only as a master to give him orders, but also as a fellow-workman to help him in performing them. A character of so strong domestic tendency seems not favourable to enterprise. And yet when its spirit is once roused it is through its very native steadfastness proof against all hindrances, and though slow in taking counsel, sure in work on that very account, and clever, because cool and prepared, in making the best of the situation into which it has been brought. A century about of tyrannical compression under the Norman followed by three centuries of legislative expansion under the Plantagenets afforded ample time and wide room with many opportunities for the formation of such a character.

Now see we not the hand of the Lord throughout? Let us single out one instance among many of its varied operation. We have already remarked his providence in raising up in continuous succession three able princes in

the Norman line. This seems the more signal when we cannot find such a succession through the whole extent of French history, nor through the remainder of our own. So far from it, that down to the end of the direct Plantagenet line in Richard III. there are nearly as many weak monarchs as strong, and their order so different from the forementioned continuity, that Fuller, with more wit than accuracy, has remarked on its alternation. Therefore, from the former rights were obtained which the latter found it high time to sanction ; and, with ever so strong will, and ever so great talents, Edward I., in a reign of thirty-five years, could never recover the ground lost in the seventy-three years of the two previous reigns, and bring the monarchy back from what he might in his own heart have reckoned for its captivity. Thus, contrary to the general course of politics, the weakness of the princes was the strength of the people, in whom, to a firm spirit of self-reliance, was now added one of steady progress.

With the Plantagenets, also, expired the old feudal nobility, extirpated by the successive devastations made by the crusades and civil wars. Thus a wide gap was left between a people which had acquired a quick sense of its rights and a monarch who had acquired an enormous addition to his power. Now, therefore, was the very crisis in the fixing of the national character, and had the Stuarts been given instead of the Tudors, it is not difficult to conclude from the result of their conduct in Scotland the great mischief which they would have done in England. Its national character so dealt with would have taken the course of its worse tendency, and become sour, querulous, aggressive, impracticable, and therefore impractical. But the Tudors were given, who, to a high stomach, but consummate ability, in three at least out of five of their line, added a thorough congeniality with the hearty English mind, and a knowledge as to how far they may go, and when and where to recede, if need be, and early enough to seem to grant a favour

where, in fact, they were making a concession ; and thus, with a high courage tempered with prudence, even in the bold Henry VIII., were enabled to humour the English temper and win the respect of the English mind, and thus to keep up the national spirit at the right pitch for upwards of a century. The Lord's hand was surely in so singular a direction. Where else shall we find three such sovereigns so set in their right order and places as the two last Henrys and Elizabeth ? At the end of the last reign the nation had attained that character to which, under divine guidance, has been owing the acquisition and maintenance of our colonial empire.

But during their reign, and conducted to its end by them as instruments, occurred an event which, like a general day of judgment, tried all the national characters of Europe of that day, and ultimately fixed them where they remain at this hour. That was the Reformation, by which, being brought under the most potent influence of change, they were drawn

out to the fullest extent of their substance, discovered each their own original strength and peculiar bent, and either came short, or broke, or met the weight and reached the standard required. These last, elevated by such a cause to their highest pitch of aspiration, and aroused by its sacredness, acquired a vigour and displayed an earnestness, in company with other qualities, which were hardly suspected before. Ours had grown up into one of sound common sense, through which the mind held an object ever distinctly before it, with patience to consider the means of attainment, and with a daring spirit in the use of them.

But even thus far highly qualified, it would never of itself have sufficed to bring our nation up to its present mark, not more than adequate as it was to securing so much as our national safety, and much less equal to acquiring and administering a national empire. For we must confess to certain defects in it, through which the old religion kept no slight hold upon it, so that if Mary had reigned ten years instead of

five, it might again have become fixed and fast, at that lower mark up to this day. In company with the forementioned qualities is naturally found a certain worldly-mindedness, which as naturally induces a love of gross enjoyment, to which the man surrenders himself the more implicitly from the very clearness of sight and resolution of mind with which he works towards the fulfilment of his will, and therefore, also, gratification of his passions. And while potentially most clear-sighted, most active, most daring, he may be effectually most reckless, most slothful, most unready. Who has not often met with this type of character among such as we should reckon for the most genuine English amongst us, in the moral condition of the most native portion of our population, the lower of the middle and upper of the lower classes—a body whose movements are so powerful in the machinery of our national government?

No little to his mind, therefore, was much of the old religion. The licence, so freely ac-

corded by it to merrymaking in merry England, seconded by the ready indulgence of the resulting sins by a system of too easy absolution, was quite agreeable to it, and often would suffice to overlay the worthy part of this character with the unworthy. But the tendency of the Reformation being, on the contrary, to awaken conscience and to infuse heavenly-mindedness, it was roused to a lively state of consciousness, inspired with a spirit of promptitude, with a desire of improvement, while its natural curiosity had such occupation as never had been given to it before : and thus, in the reformation of the national church was included the reform of the national character, which again wrought out the reformation of the State in due progress as it unfolded and adapted itself to events from generation to generation; until there has resulted a moral state so tempered, a social state so blended, a political state so nicely adjusted, not only so as to afford to this character, there found, free scope, but also to foster it, instruct it, and stir

it up with loud calls to action and duty, in all its native excellence of quality.

Now we can perceive why we came so late into the field of colonization, and why, when come, we made up so effectually for lost time. Our national character had not attained its full manhood until the Reformation had gained time to work its proper effect upon it, and that was hardly before the end of the sixteenth century. So did God's gracious providence keep us back, until we had grown up into ripe strength for a race with formidable rivals, whom, after having given them a long start, we have overtaken and left standing still and tired on the course behind us, wondering at the distance at which they already see us beyond them. And moreover the parsimony of Henry VII., the prodigality of Henry VIII., the spoliations and contests for ministerial power under Edward VI., and again the straitened political situation, as well as pecuniary cautiousness of Elizabeth, were obstacles which it had not at once strength to overcome ; nor was it well that it should, for

meanwhile its slow progress was more sure. These were but the resistance of the whetstone which sharpens the sword, and were interposed by the Lord for the more effectual working of his instrument.

Thus endowed, England not only soon surpassed all such nations as were still abiding by the rude laziness of the old religion, but even left behind her the reformed and energetic Dutch. She had the advantage of these latter in a larger territory, affording her proportionally superior means. But she had also a peculiar and more happy organization of society which left the national character quite free to act in all ranks, so well was it adapted to bring forth and employ all our best men, and draw forth into cheerful co-operation the virtue of every class, high, middle, and low ; high feeling and noble bearing from the upper, shrewdness and activity from the middle, endurance and industry from the lower, all contributing wisdom and courage, truthfulness and good sense from all and for all. Nothing less could supply the extraordi-

nary demand of such quantity, and of such variety of quality as our high station has brought upon us. The nation has been called upon for deputed sovereigns to administer to countries so different in every respect as India and Canada, for governors of colonies in all stages of mixture with natives, and in all degrees of legislative establishment, such as Sierra Leone, New Zealand, and Australia; and these in the state of peace and of war, for military chiefs in the most varied and strange kinds of warfare—whether with Indian armies or Kaffir bands; for residents at barbarous courts, for heads of factories, for explorers of land and sea, to say nothing of the requirements of the European part of our charge. And yet the supply has never failed from the first, from the day when we held the ground of a factory from an Indian prince to the day when we are holding all the soil of India in sovereign rule. It has grown with our wants, and will grow still, ever as we do our duty to Him who has fashioned us from the womb.

For the cause is not due to ourselves ; no contrivance of our heads framed such a constitution of our state ; no skill or might of our hands wrought the opportunities, or supplied the instruments : nor did our hearts design the deep counsels, or heads furnish the wonderful wisdom which we now see must have presided over such an operation as made a new creature of old England.

Let, then, the serious Englishman, humbly thankful at this review of divine mercies, cry out, “ Oh, that He that has made us, and not we ourselves, ever met at our hands and from our hearts with the service of honour, blessing, and thanksgiving which is due unto his name : and that the great Head of his Church, whom we have been taught to approach directly in his own enthroned and glorified body, and not through intermediate human grossness, obtained from us that service which He requires, and which alone in the sum constitutes our title to the lofty position which we are enjoying at this day.” What a heart-

stirring conviction it is that we are going forward on a highway made for us by our God, and with what thankfulness should we own that as soon as we had lost all sight of Calais, which had so long blinded us to the sight of better things, He opened our eyes to the true goal, set us at the proper starting-place of our nation's race, during which she forgets her objects of the old world which is behind, and reaches forth unto the things which are before of the new world. Oh, may that old world, as we forsake it, contain all that we should flee, and that new world ever remind us of all that we should pursue, being not only of the body, but of the spirit also. And ever may our national strife be for the crown, not of France, nor of merely territorial and barbarous empire, but for that which shall crown the service of Christian civilization, and of the acquirements of the kingdoms of the earth for the kingdom of Christ. So help us, O Lord God of England!

CHAPTER VII.

On the Providential Removal of the Danger of Annexation to Foreign Dominion, arising from the Matrimonial Alliances of the Tudors.

WE have already seen how England was brought safe by the hand of her God through the extreme peril of annexation to foreign territory, so far as that was sought to be wrought by force of arms, and also both as conquered and as conquering. But the same peril may result from another much more frequent, much more quiet, and much more effectual operation, which is that of matrimonial alliances contracted by sovereigns. By such the present state of Austria was formed: thus great part of modern France has coalesced. Thus Spain became one: and thus, after centuries of bloody and fruitless war, England and

Scotland were united. On such ground our Edward III. built his pretension to the crown of France; on such Henry V. founded his right and that of children to the same. We have seen how the Lord's arm dealt with their ambition, and delivered us from its terrible consequences. But never was the connection fraught with such tremendous results to European kingdoms as during the period when the Reformation was in preparation, or agitation. It turned the scale when the weights of political balance were trembling with almost insupportable heaviness of consequence. Through this more insidious, but much more disastrous peril, England was again brought safe by a series of providential interpositions, which shall now be stated. May it awake the reader's heart to a due sense of the great mercies of which he has been made partaker, and to a thankful adoration of that heavenly might and ruling wisdom through which they have reached him.

The success of the great movement of the Reformation in any country at such a period, depending very much upon the part taken by the sovereign, was indebted to a peculiar political crisis in England. The power of the sovereign, having been greatly augmented by the destruction of the old nobility, gave to his personal affection and private interest unusual weight. His matrimonial alliances therefore with foreign princes were now more than ever concerned with the vital prosperity of the country, and if contracted with the royal families of France or Spain, and so long as the people was not very unequally divided by the parties of the old and new state of religion, would bring a Papal sovereign of England, for his safety's sake alone, into an undue and dangerous dependence upon one of the forementioned powers, and might, moreover, bequeath a legacy of annexation to it. Such perils actually arrived, and were in the end effectually, though after much difficulty, dispersed.

In estimating them we must attend to the connection thus existing between the reformation of our Church and the independence of our country. We shall then plainly see our danger. Slippery indeed at first was the hold which the Reformation obtained here. So nearly balanced in influence, if not in numbers, seem the two parties concerned in it, that when Mary Tudor came to the throne, the space of a year and a half sufficed for the undoing of all which the four last years of Edward VI. (reckoning from the issue of the English Prayer-book) had been employed in doing. So far from loose was the hold which the old system retained on the mass of the people after such apparently utter eradication. How fast, therefore, had been that hold formerly. Considering this we shall be alive to the impression of the consequences of what seem ordinary chances to many at this day. But however mocked at as empty phantoms now, they were substantially pregnant with too much dreadful certainty then. And even

after the last open victory of the new cause, so much advantage still remained to the old as was reckoned upon for being highly available whensoever a change of dynasty should bring about a favourable opportunity of putting it to account. Perhaps it is not too much to say, that though the nation after Mary's death never returned to its former spiritual allegiance, yet down even to the accession of the present reigning family there remained the danger, and for a time directly under James II., if not indirectly under Charles II. before him, the experience of a Papal government of a Protestant kingdom, at least such as is seen at this day in Saxony, and we know how disastrously the energies of the nation were crippled, its moral tone lowered, and its European station degraded by such influence and counsels.

Those chances, as some may now deem them, were their anxious prospects, threatening our country with not only spiritual dependence on the Bishop of Rome, but conjointly

also with temporal dependence upon the King of France or of Spain. They that mock so freely at the fears of our forefathers, little consider the real ground of those alarms which so disquieted them, which are so loud in their writings, so inaudible in ours. But they had neither less wisdom nor less courage than their children ; but, like truly brave men, only feared lest a time of fear should come, and prepared themselves accordingly to meet it. So God was with them, and through them is with us at this day. That mighty Captain went before us, at whose presence all these chances, full though they were of menace of shameful ruin, came to nought, being consumed as smoke driven before the wind, or as wax melted before the fire. So let us read heedfully, and tremble wholesomely, before that gracious conqueror.

This portion of our history introduces us to a long and great national trial, which gave a second birth through fire to our nation. From the renunciation of the supremacy of

Rome to the termination of her last appearance on the throne in the person of a professed servant, elapsed a century and a half. What an interval is this to study for instruction of head and heart. We cannot be too deeply moved, we cannot too seriously examine the scene, or scrutinize the actors on that stage, where the Lord God of England has so plainly interfered to do so much for us.

Indeed the tragedy were one of too complicated a plot, too horrible a spectacle, were it not for the glorious and explanatory appearance of his intervention at the end. Shall we, then, as some have done, turn it into a comedy for ourselves, and indulge a bantering censoriousness; or into a battle-field, where we are at liberty to espouse the side which best suits our whimsical temper, and then, by expanding or narrowing the basis of events, by exaggerating or suppressing facts, whiten or blacken characters for support of our paradox. Unmoved by the hisses or applauses of such spectators, the true Christian will bring to

the spectacle a spirit of truth and love, as being admitted to a grand exhibition of divine operation. He will read with reverence, mark with wisdom, learn with patience, and temper every emotion of indignation with a yearning of pity under prayer to Almighty God to spare himself from such fiery trials, while we stand aghast at the fearful sight of men working out at once their own present vile purposes, and his future glorious end, like the malefactors who toil in chains at some work of public benefit. Their wages have, perhaps, been death to their own souls, while ours have received gifts of life. So, as the train of historical characters sweeps before us, let us be full of thankfulness that, so far from having had the sin of our forefathers visited upon us, we have received blessings at His hands double for all their transgressions.

Let us also disabuse our minds of that fallacy which argues that no work proceeding from the hands of the ungodly can have its origin in the favour of God towards those who

become partners in it, either by carrying it further, or by receiving any fruits from it. If so, what becomes of our benefits derived from the decree of Augustus Cæsar, which effected the birth of Jesus at Bethlehem? What of those received from Pilate, whose order nailed Christ to the cross? And, surely, such as contend for the value and holiness of gifts derived from the hands of Constantine, Phocas, or Capet, must not dare to condemn those who ascribe any spiritual gift to a work of Henry VIII. Were Charles V., Philip II., Francis I., men of such superior character to him that they may boldly own the benefit of stopping the Reformation received from them, but we must be ashamed and confounded at the imputation of receiving the beginning of our Reformation from him? The formation of our earth tells us that this world, formed for man, came forth from a world formed, in its first stage, for monsters; yea, and the work of the salvation of our souls admonishes us that Christ received His flesh from flesh,

which had been continued down from the union of David and Bathsheba, and through some very turbid channels too.

Besides, inasmuch as we cannot readily show the line of distinction between the least blameable evil and the least approvable good, may not what at present seems to us evil be a thing on its passage to good ; and may not good be traced back to apparent evil, as that birth of Christ can be traced to wicked kings of Judah ? So let us dismiss such cavillings, confessing that all God Almighty's ways converge to one end, which, however, is in sight only to such as will look beyond this world. To eyes that look not so far, they are as exceedingly long converging lines seen through a short extent, and therefore appearing parallel and unconnected. On the other hand, lines of perspective of an object seen too nearly at hand converge to a point too near for just perception of proportion, and therefore we lose sight of their harmony. So, also, when we survey the lines of direction of the works of

God's providence in a near and worldly view, we cause the point of their tendency to fall within a narrow range of time, while it may lie even beyond time's bounds. And then, forsooth, we set ourselves up to pass judgment upon tendencies and ends.

Such observations it seemed advisable to make before entering upon this debateable ground. Let us proceed upon it with light heedfulness of step, aware of the fire which is glowing under the crust of cinders which has not so long cooled.

The first circumstance that meets us is the marriage of Arthur Tudor to Catherine, the daughter of the King of Spain, introducing a connection of high rank to our monarch, but full of extreme peril to the independence of the country. Had he lived, there needed not to have arisen cause sufficient to provoke the violent step of a rupture with Rome, as far as the little that we can discern of one who was removed so early enables us to conclude. His unfolded character might have displayed that

difference from Henry's which is so very often seen in the eldest and second brothers of a family. And as Henry's seems to have taken its type through his mother, stamped with the profuseness, the unbridled lust, the cruelty, the love of pleasure, which disgraced his grandfather, Edward IV., so his might have reproduced the coldness of temperament, the politic cautiousness, the love of money, of his father. And as he was brought up with the same care as to learning as his brother, and we know the effects of that, and as by neither side did he inherit any especial fountain of mercifulness, or of indulgence of another's judgment, there is little argument for supposing that an opening, such as was presented in his brother, would have occurred in his conduct or counsels. He would not probably have gone out of the way for love of money or love of women, but on the contrary his connection with a family which exceeded all in its devotion to the Church of Rome, and the society of a wife who had fully inherited it, and afterwards exercised no little

influence in maintaining Henry's loyalty towards its chief, would have kept him devoutly strait within bounds. Indeed, it is not easy to see how he could have been otherwise than exact in his dutifulness towards Rome without grievously displeasing Catherine, and alienating the good will and incurring the ill will of Spain, which had lately grown up into the most formidable state in Europe, and was the last power with which to quarrel without very great necessity. But the Lord removed him, and without giving him any fruits of a marriage, which might have been a son, determined by the events of the day more than even his father would have been against the Reformation; or a daughter, through whom not only connection but annexation also to Spain might have ensued. Throughout this and all speculation which we can most reasonably frame concerning our condition under Arthur, the odds are surely against us, and we are bound to see the merciful hand of God in removing him, and to confess that His mercy endureth for ever.

Coming from such preliminaries, we perceive also more distinctly the hand of divine intervention in the course of Henry, which, while it was directed to the maintenance of the doctrine of the Church of Rome to the last, yet admitted of the entrance of the Reformation through the breach which he had made in her discipline. Nothing could seem at first more unlikely than such a result. He and Catherine lived almost twenty years happily together, nor was there a throne in Europe where the thought of a rupture with the Pope was less conceivable. But the most fatal shipwrecks have happened in a calm, and on a rock which none suspected. The Lord had opened Catherine's womb only to destroy its fruit again, as by an untimely frost, except in the case of one daughter; and the exception only added to the bitterness of the disappointment of one, to whom it was the earnest desire of his heart, if not the prime consideration of his policy, to have a son. But the same Lord had taken the wise in their own craftiness. The Head of the Church could not

in consistency—to say nothing of policy—revoke his sanction of a breach of divine law, and a better man than Clement would have faltered at rescinding what had been authorized by a worse man, could such have readily been found, than Julius. At the same time he was more than usually unfitted for a contest with Henry, and by weak and impolitic treatment contrived at once to wound the pride of the proudest man alive, and to cut his heart to the quick in the deepest affection it was capable of entertaining. He commanded him to dismiss Anne and take back Catherine.

Surely the hand of the Lord was here in providing so unequal an antagonist for Henry. What might not a prudent and determined Pope, unentangled with the politics of Spain or France, have done with Henry, who was sensible to ingenuous treatment, had been hitherto the most devoted of his servants, and like all wilful men offered a handle for treatment through counterbalancing weaknesses, of which he had given proof by his vanity being

so tickled with the straw of the title of Defender of the Faith, and actually had gone so far as to make a conditional submission. Might he not, therefore, have been in the end reconciled to the head of that body, to the spirit of which he continued so attached, and like his neighbour Francis I., have taken his new steps with greater decision on account of his former indecision? As it was, he died in the midst of a cruel persecution of that faith to which his renunciation of Romish supremacy had given such encouragement. A longer reign might, in any case, have deprived the Reformation of all its heads, and left little choice of his course to a successor. Impartially as he lopped off the more towering heads of both parties, those of the Protestant were comparatively of more consequence to their party, and could less be spared. But it may not only have done that, but in six years—no unlikely addition in itself to a life of sixty-five—he would have survived his son Edward, and Mary would have succeeded and brought the national church back

into submission to the supremacy of Rome without the need of the recourse to the infliction on the reforming party of those sufferings which much more generally than their teaching alienated the heart of the nation from Rome.

But he might at the outset have had a son by Catherine and been spared all the troubles that ensued in default of one. Where then had been, humanly speaking, a chance for the Reformation? She would have maintained her influence with Henry in promoting his devotion to the Holy See, and her son, the brother of Mary, whom we see to have learned her lesson so well, would have been brought up in a very different school from that which formed Edward. His natural, his religious, his political affections, all most studiously trained to one end, would have placed him in a kind of tutelage to Spain, so that he would have ruled England less as an independent country, than as a province of that inexorably fanatical and cruel power. What indeed might have been our condition at this moment? If

that power which had become our master arrived in its tradition at this generation in so deep a state of ignorance, weakness, and all degradation, what would have been the lot of her servant? How shameful, how death-like must have been her condition at this day. But the merciful and gracious favour of our Lord God ordained otherwise, and we are not lying in the grave of nations that have become dead to their former state of power and glory, utterly disqualified for celebrating Him through useful service in his church; but we are flourishing in all wealth and blessedness, we are living, we are living to praise him, and our fathers can in all thankfulness of enjoyment make known his truth to their children.—(Isai. xxxviii. 19.) Oh, may they do it from generation to generation. It concerns the continuance of the life of England.

But the hand of God stayed not here, but went down in merciful prevention a generation deeper. Her daughter Mary had set her heart

upon a son, not only on her own account, as a bond between herself and a cold husband, but also in a sincere, however mistaken, zeal for the good of God's church, which, through such uninterrupted succession, should be thoroughly re-established in the land in at least all its former undisputed authority. So fully did her party enter into her feelings, that when the much desired birth was announced they burst forth into a general response, and *Te Deum* was sung amid ecstasies of triumphant joy. But the announcement was never confirmed by fact, and we can respond with not less joy and thankfulness to the reality. Oh, what a gracious deliverance was this. The very notion of a child, son or daughter, to a father steeped in the blood of the Netherlands, to a mother steeped in the blood of England, and whose eyes would have opened their sight upon the blazing fires of persecution, and ears commenced their hearing at the shouts of the torturing and screams of the tortured, turns the cheek pale. England, our fair

England, a slave to Rome, and a province to Spain, is again the frightful prospect. Where had been our refuge, where a glimpse of hope? Like the child of the woman at the stake in Smithfield, born in the fire, she would have been cast into the fire and consumed.

Neither, in this account of escapes from threatened evil, should there be omitted the fact of the marriage of Mary the sister of Henry VIII. to Lewis XII. of France. No good to our country could have come out of it, but much evil was very possible. It might have transferred to a French succession a title to the English throne in case of the failure of the Stuarts, and been a very serious obstacle in the way of the accession and quiet of the reign of Elizabeth. And if that obstacle, with the joint help of Rome and France, had been made good, it would have indeed removed the danger of dependence on Spain, but only to substitute for it the peril of appendage to France. The stomach of

the nation might not have brooked the degradation. Nevertheless, it must have cost a fearful struggle, bringing throes which would have been felt at this day. But the Lord granted no fruit to this marriage also.

Some may, perhaps, now say that there is too much speculation in all this, and that nothing is more easy than thus to raise bugbears out of the collateral bearings of the main series of events, and forge perils out of possibilities. But yet can the true direction of that series be determined without ascertaining those bearings? Can the positive be properly understood without its negative, the success without the failure, the good without the evil? When a man opens his heart in thanksgiving to Almighty God, does he place in the account nothing but the good which has been received, and omit the evil which has been withheld? Surely this latter class engages his attention very deeply. It discovers more and more as he looks upon it the excellence of the gift, the peculiar privi-

lege of it, its independence of all his own efforts, his utter unworthiness of what now appears to be God's gracious selection for him out of a chaos of good and evil—of good which he never could have deserved, of evil of which he could not dare to say before his God that he was undeserving. It is only after such a process of impartial scrutiny into the course of his life, that his thanks can have sufficient reference to their subject, and coming up to any adequate measure of fulness can be accepted, and call forth further tokens of God's gracious favour. To his mind even the life of a single day, duly examined, may reveal a list of evils through the course of which it has run in safety, and at the end of it he considers himself as having accomplished one more voyage across a sea of perils. And thus he not only offers his thanksgiving to God with a fuller and more hearty appreciation of the gift, but grows also in experience of God's ways, and wisdom of spirit, and knowledge of that which he

ought to seek, and of that which he ought to shun. And should nations think and do otherwise? They are large families: and families often have reason to congratulate themselves that such a member never married, that such another was childless, that such another was taken away at such a time. The relations of nations are very much wider, but not therefore shallower: more numerous, therefore more complicated, therefore not so commonly understood or acted upon. But that were no excuse for a common disregard of them. They to whom God has given the means ought to learn them diligently for themselves, and to teach them dutifully, and thankfully to others. In short, in regard to the family of our nation let us estimate their consequence by the singular fact concerned with this part of our history, that the wombs of Henry's wife Catherine, of his daughter Mary, and of his niece Mary, were all anxiously expected to bear males, and many and earnest prayers were imploring such birth at a most critical period of our national

fortunes, when they seemed all to depend upon the sex, and only females grew up.

The daughter of Henry's niece here demands our attention, for full of misfortune was her birth to her family, full of disastrous perplexity to the nation for several generations, until their course had ceased to run upon the earth. Margaret, Henry's eldest sister, had been given in marriage to James IV. of Scotland, whose son, James V., married the Lady Guise, one of a family implacably hostile to the Reformation, and decidedly adverse to English interests. But the ever-ruling hand was here again put forth. A male heir would at all events have been jealously kept on the spot, and so continued the use of his father's counsellors, and followed up his counsels in the suppression of the Reformation which had already found its way into Scotland. Having made himself master there, he would have been set up by the Romish party in England in a much more formidable opposition to Elizabeth, as next lawful heir after the daughter of Catherine, than Mary, the

female offspring, could have raised. But she had not even that common advantage, being early removed to France. Truly the ship in which she sailed carried the fortunes of England. Her mother took her place, being chosen Regent, and under more than the usual disadvantages of the foreigner. For she was both a Frenchwoman and a Guise, and therefore doubly disqualified for meeting a crisis which required the intimate knowledge of a people of whom her countrymen cared to know nothing, except that they were a nation of useful barbarian auxiliaries to them against their national enemy; which demanded a thorough congeniality with their temper, patient consideration of its present moodiness, rigid maintenance of good faith, watchful adaptation to the varying character of the events which followed each other in quick succession in a country where public opinion had been suddenly raised but to be floated like dust into the winds of conflicting party. Such disadvantages may indeed seem to have been compensated to

Mary by her splendid marriage, through which she became Queen of France for one brief year. That, however, added but another example of unfruitfulness disappointing to herself, but most opportune to England, whom a son of Francis II. must have placed in miserable jeopardy.

It was already indeed a time of no little peril to our independence, when she and her husband had begun to assume the style of King and Queen of England and Scotland in the face of the accession of Elizabeth, and thus France was avowedly set upon endeavouring to gain for herself that affectation of supremacy over us which Spain by the death of Mary Tudor had so lately foregone. The court even went so far as to meditate an invasion with assurance of success. The death of Francis indeed put an end to such a design. But still, had the desired heir been born to them, England's chains might have been riveted, and the more we desired independence so much the more would France have endea-

voured to reduce us to the condition of a province, that we may become instead of Great Britain merely a greater Brittany, and vanish *de facto*, if not *de jure*, from among the nations of Europe.

The more we consider this crisis so much the more shall we be convinced that Elizabeth was a special gift to this country from the hand of God. Had she and Mary changed characters—had hers been ordinary, and not vigorously peculiar, endued with clever softness rather than with able hardness; had it been educated in the enjoyment and flattery of a court, and not seasoned by the use of adversity and the severity of a prison; had she been one whom men would love for the winning grace and soft beauty of royalty, and not admire and respect for the impressive grace and commanding dignity of sovereignty, it would have fared ill with England indeed. She would not by any means have borne up against the exceeding difficulties of her position. But she was altogether an uncommon person, and therefore

was not found unequal to the uncommon position. How gallantly indeed did she fill it. And yet how easily might such a gift have been intercepted, even after it had been seen enough to be prized. It was by some prized enough to be dreaded, and therefore sent out of the way. There was an early attempt to send her off as a partner to the Ducal throne of Savoy; she was near being sent as Queen to the North of Europe; she was as near being sent to the scaffold. And even after being a good gift there was the possibility of her becoming a bad one by a bad marriage. Such was proposed in the case of the Duke of Anjou, and thankful should we be that it came to nought. It would have been a cause of fresh and perilous entanglement with France, and an heir by the marriage would have brought back again the political and religious confusion which had been so happily allayed.

Even supposing, what is surely not very likely, that he would have become a sincere Protestant, proof against the power and argu-

ment of family connexion, yet he might have found a challenger of his lawful title in the Scottish sovereign ; and France, who would be glad to revenge her former disappointment, might have held us in the vice of a ruinous domestic war. At any rate the union with Scotland would have been indefinitely delayed, while every successive year showed more clearly the exceeding urgency of the step, as it showed the growing power and bolder ambition of France, and how effectually she could weaken and distract her ancient rival by attaching Scotland to her own interests, if not to her own dominions. It may even have been effected at last by no less a price than that of the best blood of both countries struggling in union and for years against a common hateful foreign tyranny.

And not only for its substance was the gift great, but for its duration also. Every true Englishman, of whatever religious party, as the threat of the Armada discovered, felt this, seeing her life plainly standing as a shield

between himself and subjection to foreign dominion, and earnestly prayed Almighty God to prolong it. And in a wonderful manner He did prolong it, through a tedious inquietude of plot after plot, originating from the pretensions of her cousin, who had thrown herself into the arms of Rome and Spain, with an abandonment of all sense of principle and patriotism, which would seem unaccountable, if we did not consider that her peculiar ill-fortune, which, at the time, seemed so good, had deprived her of all means of attachment to country, and consigned her moral and spiritual education to the very worst teachers that, perhaps, in any age or country could be found, either for instilling deep and true principle, or for preparing her for the terrible difficulties which her commonplace mind had to combat. It does not, therefore, strike us with wonder, although it does with sorrow, when we hear of her at the outset of life setting her seal to a clandestine conveyance of her kingdom to France, and, at the close

of it, disinheriting her son, should he be a Protestant, and bequeathing the crown of England to Spain. Let us look from her to Elizabeth, with all due consideration of the faults of both, and confess that it humbles our pride, makes us to roll in the dust before Almighty God the disposer of all events, when we think that He should have submitted the destinies of our mighty country to be worked out by the exhibition of the characters of two women, both affected with weaknesses, and yet have so contrasted them that shame and ruin seem as naturally to proceed from the one, as glory and prosperity from the other. And the other prevailed; and that, too, without any especial choice or effort on our part at the outset. We but accepted the one who was more immediately set before us on the spot. Can we sufficiently express the sense of our unworthiness and utter helplessness, and of the Lord's power and might, and great favour towards us. Shall not our song be that of his people of old, "Our fathers

hoped in Thee, they trusted in Thee, and Thou didst deliver them.”—(Psalm xxii. 4.) Let us add to these words of David those of his wise son, spoken before his assembled people : “The Lord our God is with us, as He was with our fathers. Let Him not leave us, nor forsake us.”—(I. Kings viii. 5); and those of his enduring and faithful Job : “The hand of the Lord hath wrought this.”—(Job xii. 9.)

So did the Lord’s hand ward off the various and imminent perils of annexation, and direct the arm of England under the Tudors. It is seen manifest and strong, as setting her upon her course. We have henceforward to behold it stretched forth in less seeming, though not less real might, for direction rather than impulsion along that course, and, therefore, making use of agents of less decision of character. They were, indeed, as ready as their predecessors to drive; but their hand was unsteady, and quite unable to rule without offence a people that would no longer be driven. In short, we exchange the Tudors for the Stuarts.

CHAPTER VIII.

On the Deliverance from Perils arising from similar Causes under the Stuarts.

THESE dangers of annexation begin now to show a less formidable front. The position at which England has arrived, under the vigorous rule of the last of the Tudors, has made it impossible for her to submit to annexation to any power in Europe. But the highest and strongest position may be very seriously weakened and lowered by a government ill-conducted, and influenced by an unnational spirit. Accordingly, the mischief which proceeded from the Stuarts, though not fatal, was wide and deep. Their administration stood in the way, humanly speaking, of all approach to our present greatness, crippled our national energy, and, for a season, ruinously affected

the best and dearest interests of the country. Yet is the merciful direction of the counsel of God manifest throughout, and its pillar, no longer glittering with a soft and white fleecy cloud of domestic peace and national prosperity, mingling with the objects of the face of joyous day, but with a brightly-defined light, contrasted sharply with the darkness of the night of domestic trouble and national adversity, is seen moving at the head of our people. Proceeding on his usual plan, God humbled us for a season, in order to exalt us to a higher degree than ever. He was building us up. But as the ground which is to bear a grand pile of building must be allowed to sink that it may be firmly settled under what has been already laid, before further courses be added, so his glorious architectural hand provided for the due subsidence taking place, by bringing in a new dynasty, whose different character and new relations wrought an immediate and depressing change in public affairs.

The discipline under which her Lord God had been educating England had, as we have already remarked, been hitherto administered under Him by agents of decisive character, who were much more in the habit of employing corporal infliction than of allowing appeal to argument. Elizabeth, however, had the sagacity to perceive that the nation had outgrown the state of the stripling, and required a more liberal treatment. Her successors had not the same discernment, and treated the rising discontent as the rebellion of the school-boy, and not as the determination of the educated man. Indeed, the first James irresistibly impresses every reader of his reign with the notion of a pedantic schoolmaster, and of having, therefore, been one of those who have had the ill-luck of missing their proper vocation. But he and his family only furthered the end designed by God, the more actively from their unwillingness to concede that which they had not sufficient firmness to retain.

At starting, the rash feebleness and uncer-

tainty of hand of this truly inferior race gave a sense of looseness of rein to the people, but yet unwittingly ; and when afterwards wittingly, then so unwillingly, and with so bad a grace, that it should take it without thanks, only in order to gain more ground for opposition, and thus, from having the limbs more free, should feel its full strength and suppleness, unfold its latent energies, and spend to advantage the store which had been so long heaped up by close and careful custody. Never, indeed, did a family stand in more need of special guidance from above, and never did a family with so much pretension of seeking it put it to so little account, and prove that they had not truly found it. The navigation of the political sea had become more dangerous, and they who stood at the helm only more unreasonably secure and more rashly indecisive. They intended to bring the vessel into a haven of their own choice, and their people brought it into another of its own choice, and with their place on board empty.

The series of miserable disasters which befell the Stuart family, from first to last, proclaims some great and peculiar defect deeply inherent in its character. Such was its inconsistency, that not even the infusion of the blood of the sturdy Tudors could avail to correct it. The will of the sturdiness went into it, without the wit to discern the signs of the times. And that decisive form and token of weakness which is manifested in the deputation of power to favourites had appeared, amid much political mischief, before our James I. had introduced the family, with all its peculiar defects, and, in his case, with few of its peculiar merits, to the English throne. His reign, which exhibits him asserting as much power as ever amid a weakness disclosed in his position for the first time in that age, challenging even a more marked respect to authority amid deeds which raised unwonted contempt for the royal person, and arrogating for wisdom what in all other eyes was miserable folly, marks the transition from the slight ruffle of the latter days of Elizabeth

to the stormy agitation of the period of Charles I. The sovereign exerting his power in increasing weakness, reeled further back from a more continued and violent check ; the people, advancing on him in quiet fulness of strength, fixed step firmly in order after step. Some indeed have thought that a just line of constitutional right might have been drawn at one time between the two parties, where they might have stood relatively still and apart, acting on each other by gentle and regular influence of well-balanced attraction and repulsion. But both our knowledge of human nature, and our experience of God's dealings, tell us that such is not man's way, for he is never satisfied : neither is it God's way, for He makes man drink out the dregs of the cup before He will give him perfect health from it. He will make him acquainted with the good of the mean, through experience of the evil of each extreme. Not, indeed, that kings would have had a sufficient lesson if they had not received the warning of the de-

thronement of Charles, nor the people, if they had not been schooled with the admonition of the tyranny of Cromwell. Here is the key which unlocks the history of this eventful period. Verily, God is seen in it. To use the imagery of the poet, his red right hand is hurling its bolts from the midst of the pitchy darkness, and the nations tremble and flee, and the old is shattered before Him, and new rises up in its place. He is effecting a critical change in the nation, turning it from a more ancient and elementary condition to a more modern and refined—from a state which prepared our early colonization to a state which seems by this time to have all but perfected its growth. And we have now to guard against the danger of losing sight of his hand, owing to the very wonders which it hath done, and to the narrower vision which the present over-towering events afford. The field of view thus contracted is not of sufficient extent to exhibit at once cause and consequence to eyes that are content with what common observation plenti-

fully supplies at hand. But some can see that hand in the testimony of every day, having acquired habitual quickness of sight from long practice in looking forward for guidance of their daily course, as the runner for the prize straightens his course by keeping his eye fixed upon the goal. But that forward look refers them to what is behind. And as God's work before us refers us to his work behind us, and his work behind us to his work before us, so we have to keep our mind in the proper position for such a view, withdrawing it further back as the events come nearer, along that extent which exists in every heart which has been in the habit of looking at events for the revelation of the will of God, and so referring them all in order to their proper places in his providential dispensation. Such a heart has begun with the discipline of the review of the history of its own state. There it has acquired the habit of seeing its God daily nigh, and so of feeling and knowing his hand, and being enabled to recognize it amid the minuteness and compli-

cation of the public events of the day, which present to others a medley of worldly chance. It would be well for nations if statesmen had the true Christian spirit for seeing what lay before them, and that the kingdoms of this world would read their lesson in the book of the institutions of the kingdom of the world to come.

The accession of the Stuarts revived the occasion of the policy of connecting the royal family with their equals on the continent; and there was immediately exhibited in it an inexcusable indifference as to choice of the most proper, or rather a preference of the most improper. James, possessed with the notion of his own political sagacity and delegated divine ministration, was impenetrable by any sense of the national feeling, so that he was incapable of understanding the existence still more the operation of any such feeling. Baptized in the Church of Rome, bred a rigid Presbyterian, and thus an utter alien, entering the Church of England on conditions which were peculiarly

agreeable to his vanity, he seems to have considered religion, so far as the king but not his subjects were concerned, as an affair of privileged convenience. He, therefore, could see no harm in renewing a connection which promised well to himself, although it was not only justly hateful to his people, but full of peril to the Church of God, of which he had been appointed guardian in this country. He sought therefore a marriage for his son and heir among the daughters of Spain, to which power, from the habitual prostration of his heart before despotism, wealth, and formidable power, he had been disgracefully truckling. And the levity of his son and of his favourite, which in the very wooing frustrated the scheme, added to it all the shame and disgrace which could still be wanting to it in the hearts of the people. From that day trouble was never absent, until it brought judgment on his house and trial to the nation. When we have once read through the history of his family, as far as concerned with the throne of England, and

then, duly informed of the events, go over it again in the reflections of our mind, we cannot help feeling that a doom had been passed upon it, and that its very restoration was but a fatal step to its final extinction. Can we wonder that the people should be apprehensive of the displeasure of the Almighty, when they, who were now in the ripeness of their years and experience, beheld their sovereign courting alliance of blood with that power against which, in the vigour of their youth, they had themselves stood arrayed in arms in the days of the Armada?

The prosecution of this subject into the history of the Stuarts thus rather diverts our theme from its former current, as was before hinted. We have not so much to consider how the Lord's hand delivered us from the old consequences of royal marriages, for we have seen that the nation had grown too strong to submit to them; but how the new consequences affected its fortunes on its way to empire; how even by apparently retarding they really accele-

rated the course ; how, by increasing the perplexity, they made more clear the merciful hand of God in the solution.

It is not necessary to speculate upon any immediate and particular effect of this marriage, supposing it to have taken place. Nothing, however, but evil could have come forth, and we should thank the Lord for our having been spared that evil. At the least, it might have added much bitterness to the spirit of that civil contest which was now approaching, inasmuch as the public mind was still in alarm at the designs of Spain, whose decay of power, some time begun, was not observable by eyes which retained the terrible dazzle of the blaze of her former splendour, and was, indeed, for a time, veiled under the bustling interference of her ambitious minister Olivarez with her neighbours on every side. Charles could scarcely have escaped out of the entanglement which it brought him, when his father-in-law was as religiously opposed to the Dutch as his people were disposed in their favour. And all the

mischiefs which afterwards resulted from having a daughter of France for a mother were more likely to happen, and with graver consequences in the case of the children of the Spanish mother. For it is possible that the extreme perplexity of her condition may have driven the country to overlook the attachment of the son of Charles to Rome, and to be satisfied with easy conditions on the matter; while the profligacy which blunted so much the edge of the weapon of which Rome had gained hold in the sons of Henrietta may have been wanting here. Instead of it may have been a Spanish decency and gravity, which, if joined with common judgment, might have held a monarch on that throne which James needed not to have lost; and England might, like Saxony, have been ruled by a family opposed to the national religion, and thus effectually crippled in all her movements, and disabled from attaining any approach to her present station. Hemmed in as Saxony is, the want of expansion has not been seriously felt. To England it would have

been ruin. She might at this moment have been sleeping by the side of Spain, brought closer still together by renewed matrimonial connection, in the same lethargy as Spain herself for a similar reason, slept so long and so deep by the side of France. No man hindered—but the Lord forbade.

But in the very course of the defeat of the endeavour after this connection arose that which took place, evil coming out of evil, for the mischief of it has not to be conjectured. Nothing, indeed, raises in the mind a more profound sense of the doomed infatuation of the Stuarts than their seeking alliances which were so clearly opposed to the heart and mind, and evident interests of the nation. Charles, in particular, seems utterly to have forgotten his church and country twice over, when, on his return from his unsuccessful wooing in Spain, he became enamoured of Henrietta Maria, and chose her for his future queen. Again, he cared not to introduce in her connections and train a body of conspiracy

against its liberty, civil and religious, which it had done its utmost to expel. Disastrous, indeed, to his already unfortunate family, and full of trouble to his offended kingdom for two generations to come, was this marriage with the daughter of Henry IV. of France. Appropriately, indeed, was it ushered in by the fatal omen of a raging pestilence in the metropolis. In due order followed the sword. His own family had been already infected with the bad blood of the ambitious Guises ; its veins were now further poisoned with that of the Medici, the most artful and unprincipled, and of the Bourbons, the most lustful and profligate princely family in Europe. The potent infusion came forth into too notorious action in the character of his two sons, whose reigns form the only disgraceful portion of our history. But, providentially indeed for England, they partook of the domestic profligacy of their French without the political talent of their Italian cousins.

But from the outset such a partner, admitted

not only to his nuptial bed but to his council board, was an evil genius which led him from error after error to destruction. The submissions made to her hostile religion and her alien principles, provoked the nation to tax him with favour to Papists, so that his son complained in his declaration that "though the most pious and zealous Protestant that ever reigned in this nation, he could never wash off the stains cast upon him by that malice, but by his martyrdom." Truly he had to thank himself in the first instance for that malice, and might have spared himself that martyrdom.

The rising spirit of liberty, the treatment of which required such cool and skilful management, much more in fact than Charles taken at his best could of himself afford, was through her influence over him rendered implacably hostile; while his natural vacillation was by her evil persuasion and intrigues turned into an insincerity with which there was no dealing. Representing ostensibly among us civil and religious despotism, she could hardly, with the

utmost moderation, have quieted the suspicions of our nation. She seems, however, to have done all that she could to inflame them, and expose her husband to unnecessary troubles. Even one of her son's Privy Council, while he acknowledged her "to be in the drawing-room the liveliest woman of her age, was surprised that, after all her practice in affairs, she had so little either of judgment or of conduct; and he did not wonder at the miscarriage of the late king's counsels, since she had a share in them."—(*Burnett's Own Times*, p. 169, Smith's ed.) About twenty years elapsed from her arrival, when she was compelled to quit the country and leave her ill-advised husband to the defeat, to the betrayal, to the scaffold. Surely never was God's displeasure with a marriage more clearly signified. And if we see his hand in judgment upon Charles, can we not see it also in mercy on his people. Let us consider whither we might have been carried by such a wind, but for such interference.

The people was in a course of discipline

directed by Almighty wisdom and mercy under his hand, and had arrived from the position of the boy of the school to that of the youth of the college. But assuredly there was imminent danger of check to this growth, when both France and Spain had advanced alongside of us in the march of civil liberty up to a certain point; and thenceforward let us pass on and proceed alone. And this is manifest from the low state into which the country was subsequently brought for a time through the unhappy effects of the reign of Charles II. And though that was caused by reaction from a condition of violence, and was, through God's mercy, followed by another, which was justly modified to loyalty; yet we have a proof of what restraint the national temper, if wisely treated, would have borne at this period. If, therefore, the promised Henry IX. had lived to reign, and fulfilled all the expectations so generally and fondly entertained of him, had he followed the wise policy of Elizabeth and tempered prudent firmness with gracious con-

cession, narrowing the ground of Puritanic complaint by a removal of indefensible abuses, and thus brought light and life forth, instead of hiding the true principles of the Reformation and exposing them to unfounded objections from their unsightly accompaniments, he surely might have retained and transmitted a prerogative, which, if diminished from that of Elizabeth, needed not for aught that appears, to decline further in him or his successors. Thus his verification of the principles for which the people had given him credit might have been to the loss rather than to the gain of the freedom of our constitution, as to the standard at which we now appreciate it. Two or three such wise monarchs coming in immediate succession, as we have seen them providentially arise after the Norman conquest, may have rendered the England of our day very different from what we find it. The strong government which George III. was for some time enabled to wield is sufficient to assure us that things might by gentle yet firm management have

been at least so far different, that our government might have been mild and paternal, but not active and popular, and our power respectable, but not imperial.

But the Lord's hand disposed of Henry and his wise counsellors, and gave us Charles, with Henrietta, Buckingham, and Laud, for counsellors, and the discontented spirits, who otherwise might have pined away and lost all heart for want of opportunity, gained as many as could fill their hearts' content. Hence the establishments of Church and State were overthrown in hideous ruin, and for a time an offensive spectacle presented itself of rebellious violence. But the evils which it swept away, especially the tyranny of the courts of High Commission, and the Starchamber, and the mischievous powers of the Prerogative, especially of levying money, and dispensing with the operation of the laws, all which were utterly destructive of any security to freedom, and effective instruments ready at hand to a monarch of arbitrary temper, these returned

no more except for a brief season sufficient for ensuring the ruin of a faithless sovereign, and their own final extinction. But the good returned in a shape adapted to the new state of things, improved and in the way of being improved still. And, moreover, not only was a strong leaven then inserted in the mass of our constitution which is working at this day, but an admonition was given by God, if they will fear God, that thenceforward the rulers and counsellors of England must look not only to maintaining the right which shall have transmitted to them their power, but also take heed against committing the wrong if they would retain that power.

What a change indeed is this. Where else is such to be found in the history of all the world? Many throughout various lands and ages have been the kings dethroned, innumerable the nobles murdered, countless the multitudes slaughtered in street and field, but one, even this one only, temple of true and permanent liberty has arisen on the wide and

terrible field of blood. And yet as God's work, like every work of God with imperfect man, tempering mercy and judgment, it was one of time; and not man's work, and as man's self-conceit intended, done at once, the sooner to fall for the haste with which it had been done.

It even underwent long and serious interruption. For the Almighty wisdom which in old time had tried and proved his people for a whole generation after the initial act of their deliverance, in order to prepare them before he would admit them into the promised land, gave not the enjoyment of full freedom to the generation which accomplished the destruction of despotism, but to their children, prepared by further trial to make a good use of the gift. Look at the stage to which the great French Revolution has arrived at this day, and let us thankfully acknowledge our position, and bless His name for the trial. This we have now to consider.

The judgment seemed to have done its

work of mercy. The ancient constitution was restored amid the blast of trumpets, which blew such warnings as surely ought to have brought steadiness to the hearts of king and people. But there yet remained in the former the effects of the last fatal dowry of France to England. She had given us queens to the miserable Edward II. and Richard II., a mother to the unhappy Henry VI., and lately a queen to the unfortunate Charles I., and mother to those spots on the robe of English royalty, Charles II. and James II., seconds to the first of the same names in title, and first in their defects. Fit sons indeed did they prove themselves of such a mother. Both of them on their return from exile brought in their hearts the religion of their mother, and in their conduct the morals of their cousins. So little had Charles II. profited by the admonition of the misfortunes of his father, so little did he care for the peace and welfare of the country which God brought him back to govern after his com-

mandments, that he had been but two years on his father's throne before he followed his fatal example of taking a wife from among the enemies of the faith of his country ; renewed the apprehensions of the best, though not now the most, of his people, and undid all the good that he could of that which the hand of the Lord had brought out of so long and great suffering. Instead of a father of his country, he became a conspirator on the throne, pensioned by its hereditary enemy to do his detestable work, at the expense of national honour and independence. And if only his love of pleasure had left him care for public affairs, and his excessive selfishness spared him energy to conduct them, he would no sooner have turned any attention to them than he would have found his traitorous work half done for him by our intestine divisions, and by the utter want both of religion and patriotism in our public men.

So changed was the spirit of the nation. We wonder not, therefore, that when he mani-

fested his walking in the most perilous ways of his father by marrying a member of the hostile communion from a house notoriously devoted to it, the Infanta of Portugal, but one person made a motion against it when announced to Parliament, and but one person rose to second him. An indulgent spirit was this, which she met by declining to pronounce the vows of matrimony after the church prayerbook, and by not enduring the sight of the archbishop who had come to perform the ceremony. (Burnett, *ib.*, p. 118). But Charles, if in this way he took example from his father, took also another way which would have shocked him. Disgusted with such a partner, he began a course of open adultery. Thus to the wounds and derangements wrought by a civil war, he brought not the healing balm which might have been looked for from him who had in the most public manner declared himself to be the son of a martyr, but the festering poison of the most abandoned profligacy that he could inherit through his

mother, or cherish as taken from his cousins, or retain as contracted from the evil company into which both the alleviations and the embitterments of his exile had brought him. Such a monstrous spectacle of iniquity, defying all shame, had never been seen on our throne before, even in the very worst of its occupiers.

If therefore Charles had possessed not only all the wickedness and vice of his royal cousin Louis, but also a reasonable portion of his strength of determination and activity of administration, he must have prevailed—where as it was he made so successful a stand, and gained so important a ground for a plan which was to result in making the kings of England lords-lieutenant to the kings of France, and younger sons to the Church of Rome. How could it be, in the state of national degradation which could endure such conduct, but that agents for the worst work that he could wish to do should be found, not even for the seeking, but ready on the spot. Such recla-

mation as there was, such heats as were felt, only prove what determined energy might have done.

Hence this reign, with the next, is the only portion in our history which makes the English cheek to tingle and burn with unmitigated shame. Not only was our political station one of deep degradation, but our domestic society, in its upper and more exposed positions, was infected with the impurities which had been imported from abroad, or generated at home by the destruction of national, and consequently of individual, self-respect. How great indeed must have been the general indifference to character when the heartless rake, the hypocritical infidel that filled the throne, was fondly entitled the merry monarch, and was nationally popular; and how deep the debauchment of public morals must have sunk into our nation, when we see him standing at the head of the five kings which intervened between Charles I. and George III., an adulterer at the head of adulterers.

If, therefore, a son had succeeded him with the better portion of the spirit of the house of Braganza in his heart, there might have been an end to the happiness and glory of England. The grand conspiracy against her religious independence which had begun with the mother of James I. might have been accomplished in at least her fourth descendant, as far as the nation's constitutional independence was concerned, and her station among the nations might have been brought into question. And since, with our continental communication so dependent upon France as nature has made it, we must be either a power of equal rate, or her humble servant, it is not difficult to conjecture in what a position, civil and religious, we should have been at this moment. But God carried not the trial further. There was no son and heir. The wretched man had maintained a harem and not a home, and begotten bastards enough, but not one son. The hand of the Lord was empty to him in a marriage which he never ought to have contracted,

and had contracted only to defile its honourable bed.

The trial of God is further manifested in an unexpected gift issuing out of this marriage to our country. In this dark hour of her shame, and even on this very ground which promised such a crop of misfortune, it sowed the seed of one of the brightest flowers of her earthly wreath of imperial glory. Part of the dowry of Mary of Portugal had been paid in the possession of the island of Bombay, which gave us our first settlement in India independent of native princes, and became, therefore, the inauguration of our present universal empire there. What, compared with this fruit, was that of all the marriages of the Plantagenets, which had seemed in its day so splendid? What had been Anjou, Maine, Guienne, and the other provinces, compared with the presidencies and kingdoms of India, and what the lands watered by the Gironde and Loire, with the regions fed by the Indus and Ganges? And yet how quickly must any early promise, had

it even been then made, have been shrivelled up under the withering influence of the Stuarts. In fact, the peculiar class to which is owing the edifice of our Indian empire could never have grown up at all had that family remained in power. For our commerce, fettered by a corrupt system of monopoly, could never have called forth the requisite intelligence, nor diffused the requisite wealth. Our agriculture, under landlords and tenants with whom indulgence in meat and drink, and sports, would have passed for the best token of loyalty, would have supplied, and that meanly enough, but the ordinary daily needs, and failed as much to interest the mind and provoke talent as it tended to cherish laziness and repress a spirit of adventure. Neither the one nor the other could have achieved what their operation, combined under the opportunities which the favour of God presented, has done for us, and thus produced a race qualified by wisdom and courage for building such an empire as our educated middle class has succeeded in building. But

that gracious favour in due time removed the cumbrance from the ground.

But at present there remained a brother to carry on the same system of degradation, and without fear or disguise, for he began his reign with openly proclaiming from the housetop what his shrewder predecessor had said and done in the secret chamber. It now seems evident that if James had conducted his designs with cool judgment and proper temper, he might, by artfully playing parties off against each other, have gained in time a formidable strength for the Church of Rome, and large room for the exercise of despotic power. But the hand of God had raised him up to effect for us the very contrary result, inasmuch as he had received for his share in the inheritance of his family a double portion of its infatuation, together with the full amount of the rest of its failings. He had the pedantic self-conceit, without the native shrewdness of his grandfather, the vacillating obstinacy without the noble spirit of his father, the profligacy without

the good sense of his brother, and, it may be added, he had the bigotry without the judgment of his royal French cousin. So that, as surely as Elizabeth seems to have been a gift from the Lord's hand for establishing the welfare of her country by measures wisely directed towards it, so was he, for the same end, by measures foolishly directed to the ends of his vile selfishness.

Of course he was walking in the disastrous ways of his father and brother, by contracting matrimonial alliance with a family of the hostile communion, having, however, from his open change of religion a moral plea for it; but coming to the throne with this menace of uneasiness to his subjects already provided, he soon added such studied provocation as rudely awoke the nation from its slumber, irritated it with his contemptuous treatment in return for its infatuated reliance upon his honour and good faith, disgusted it with deeds of cruelty and bad faith, until he was shaken off as an intolerable burden. And yet how utterly hopeless seemed all effort of the nation to give the shock at

first, and how many independent events were to be brought to combine to the end of our deliverance. But the Lord's hand brought them together from, as it were, the four quarters under heaven. We shall examine them under another head, only remarking here what irretrievable ruin this last matrimonial alliance of the reigning Stuarts threatened in the public mind to bring upon the nation. It was, therefore, desperately averted by turning it on the offending family as soon as ever the fruits of the marriage appeared. The birth-cries of the child acted as the shrill blast of a trumpet on the nation which, now in sight of the last day of its independence and honour, was roused to the efforts of despair. The mad joy and congratulation of James and his friends were expended on that which had filled to overflowing the cup of the nation's endurance, and the triumphant verses of Dryden were the epitaph on the tomb of his own and his party's prosperity. Never did fine poet prove falser prophet. The infant on whom "it was Para-

dise to look" did indeed show himself to be looked at on our ground once, and in his son, the last pretender to the throne in the ill-fated line, twice. But so far from experiencing any relation to Paradise they were each of them glad to escape from the angry frown of a rejecting people; and after having endured the presence of this doomed family, first upon its lifespings at home, and afterwards on its motions abroad for a century and half, the nation rapidly sprang up towards her full stature in all the freedom of body and limb, as a chosen agent under the Lord's hand, and a condition demanded by the mouth of her legislature, as it prepared the accession of the new family to the throne, forbade for ever the recurrence of those matrimonial alliances which had been so fruitful of peril to her independence, and productive of such hindrances to her just political growth. May the Lord whose hand hath quelled it keep the plague far away from our door hereafter for ever.

CHAPTER IX.

*On the good Account to which God has turned the
Evils attendant upon our Civil Wars.*

TAKEN in a general view from the standing-point of God's government of this world, civil war may be considered as the penalty which a nation has to pay for doing evil that good may come; and, in fact, it is in itself the consummation of a long detail in process of such iniquity—the covert plague bursting forth in open boils. Of course great protestations are made at taking so extreme a step, and the greater in proportion to the wilfulness of the determination with which it is taken, and that not only from the policy of satisfying public opinion, but also from the convenience of appeasing individual qualmish spirit; for no public party, any more than private person,

seeks its advantage in naked evil, but always invests its intrinsic hideousness in the fold of fair garments which it borrows from a future good and rich enough, according to its easy self-persuasion, to supply them.

And so far the order of God's judgment agrees with the order of their design. He lets them have the evil of their own choice to its exhaustion, and then, when at least He has intended to chastise only into a better mind, and to stop short of destroying, He takes his turn and brings forth the good, not such, however, as they pretended to aim at, but such as their blind hearts could never have imagined. Meanwhile, religious profession has been disgraced, moral principle has been violated, cruel wrongs have been committed, kindly affections have been estranged and turned into deadly hatred, and such is the confusion of right and wrong, that in very many cases it is difficult to say which party has been the beginner, both having had, amid the large room of action and variety of view which national politics afford, an object

in prospect so fairly dressed out as to seem to justify the use of the very disputable means which promised to bring it home to them. So, after loud and long recrimination, charity and truth are quenched, the laws are put to silence, and the still small voice of conscience is stifled, and the wild shouts of armed violence begin.

Nor is the first open struggle always the last. The victorious party, no longer held together by external force, loses coherence, and what with its fragments, and what with the remnant of the vanquished, fresh combinations arise, and fresh quarrels have to be determined. And much and long may be the suffering before the Almighty Judge shall have been satisfied, and declared by his returning favour that the plague of the original offence has been exhausted. Our troubles which broke out in the middle of the seventeenth century were not ended before the middle of the eighteenth, and the terrible agitation stirred up by the French Revolution is unappeased at this day.

These reflections would lead us to a con-

clusion which experience has amply confirmed, namely, that no nation ever made sure progress and won historical station without undergoing this fearful discipline. For in this world of sin such progress must involve sin, and the more in proportion to its speed and space. And the consequent contest decides national principles, stamps national character, opens national resources. But at the same time, as to any particular civil war, its final result for good or evil, for strength or weakness, will depend much upon the stage of civilization in which the country has embarked upon it. For it is in this world to a nation that which the fever of the new country is to the immigrant, who must endure it once at least. And as when men are young or strong a fever will empty the body of its foul engendered humours, and renew strength and prolong life; but when men are old or weak, will cut short their days, or at least impair their strength for life: so also the civil wars, which renovate a young and moral country, desolate an old and corrupt.

Thus let any one compare the results of the civil wars of Rome under the Republic with those after her decline under the Empire, and he will not fail to acknowledge this truth. Even such savage wars as those of Sylla and Marius contained the seeds of good in them, compared with those of Constantine and Licinius. Patriotic principles are professed in the first, and by some held, and so God allows good to come out of them, as He did out of Ahab's profession of repentance. But nothing better than sheer personal gain and selfishness can with any face be professed in the latter, and nothing better, if so much can be said of that which is the worst, attends the result.

The providential arm of our Lord God, in directing us through such national trials, is especially conspicuous, on comparing our condition with that of France. Our civil wars have happened in an earlier and more healthy stage of civilization. For one of the blessings resulting through his gracious favour out of the miseries of the Norman Conquest was the

consolidation of England, by the stamp of its weighty foot, into one uniform mass, too hardly compacted ever to show clear distinctness of parts again ; when, if left to herself, she would most probably have crumbled down into provinces like those of France. Hence our civil wars, the term being limited to wars within one compact state, began early, and thenceforward occupied the most healthy period of the life of our body politic. On the contrary, the history of France, almost up to the time of the Reformation, is a series of provincial wars, through which, by slow degrees of a hard struggle, her kings at length concentrated a kingdom whose parts never, after all, attained the uniformity of England until after the extreme pressure of the Revolution had been applied. Hence her first real civil war was cotemporary with our third. Neither had she the advantage of coming even to that with those deep patriotic feelings and large long-sighted views which our English parties brought to their contests. For her frittered provincial

state had nourished selfish feelings, narrow views, and had banded factions rather than parties; not to say that the national defect of the love of personal distinction, which has cost her so much in other ways, operated most perniciously to her true interests in this also. Let any one call up the remembrance of the great men who were eminent in the wars of the Huguenots and the Fronde, such as Guise, Coligni, Condé, and compare them with those who figured in the nearly cotemporary English troubles, such as Essex, Falkland, Cromwell, and the difference seems remarkable. Even the last-mentioned of these began with the profession of public principles, and appears throughout to have maintained the sense of his country's good, although misled by success into ambition and crime.

Our civil wars may be reduced to three, the first of which was that of the Barons with John and Henry III.; the second that which passes under the familiar title of the wars of the Roses; the third that which has been

termed the Great Rebellion, but was not really finished before the family, with whose restoration it had seemed to be ended, was driven from the country for ever, with the charge of rebellion retorted upon them.

I. The first was the outburst of the evil which attended the Norman Conquest. Yet it came not from the mere insurrection of the oppressed party. But on the loss of Normandy the Barons, who had resided magnificently there on rents gathered from England, were obliged to come into residence, and so into a share of the general weight of the tyranny of the crown, and so also into sympathy with the suffering people. Thus throughout the struggle there prevailed a spirit which kept in view the general welfare, and to which clear witness has been borne by its erection of the two grand monuments of our constitution, Magna Charta, and the House of Commons.

History does not afford the example of another such result of civil war, so free from the backflood of evil, so full of peace and

security to nation and individual, and yet involving such a terrible power of assertion of injured right against the oppressor. Nor less admirable has been its permanency. It has been the pure deep well whence our country has been refreshed to run its course like a giant through its long series of hot trials down to this day. But alone as we have received such a benefit, let us not boast that alone we have achieved it. We ourselves were in no condition for that. England's head had been stupefied with painful amazement, her hand and her foot had been fast bound in misery and iron. She had been cast down and trampled in the mire, to become one of the lowest of the nations. Where was then her hope, and how was it that she rose up with an earnest of such freedom as not the proudest and strongest have won up to this hour, that from her glorious position of this day she points here to a document, there to an institution of that day, as conferring upon her a signal and peculiar privilege among civilized nations, as arming her

with a sword and buckler as a champion of genuine liberty? It is easy to arrange a series of second causes which play into each other's hands towards winning the final result, when that result has once been recognized. But otherwise, who, in this world of seeming abortion, and yeaning of monsters, shall say that this cause shall give birth to that effect, however logically pregnant with it. Even, however, granting this, and that the loss of Normandy turned the Normans into English, and so the English recovered their position and their rights, we have to ask how was Normandy lost, how were the hands of the kings of England enfeebled, how could man provide a succession of two such kings as the cowardly John and the feeble Henry, and further assign to their reigns the extraordinary duration of more than seventy years? Had John been a king of the character of his grandson Edward I., there would indeed have been more law, but liberty would have been out of the question. He who was so desirous

of revoking charters would not have been very ready to grant them.

To Him, then, be the thanks and the glory, by whom kings reign and nations rise and fall. No hand but his could have brought about such a change. Out of this civil war He raised us into a condition of enjoyment such as has never befallen one of the nations who were at that day standing in their strength and in wonder at our deep and seemingly irrecoverable fall. Not one among them can produce a similar charter, and, moreover, similarly recognized in letter and spirit down to this generation, so that it should supply even to it a living, practical appeal for rights in open court, and before Parliament, and not be a dead, however interesting, paper monument of them, laid up in chests and closets for the inspection of the curious amid the records of bygone days.

The record offices of France are remarkably rich in drafts of constitutions. One after another had failed in involving the essence of

true political life, framed, as they were, at a table, by the wisdom of philosophers, and not created on the field of action out of events directed by the wisdom of God, and through men whose hearts had been instructed by those events. And, therefore, in such offices alone are they now to be found, down from the first constitution under Lewis XVI., to the last which has given to France Napoleon III. But can we find in ourselves any native element of so extraordinary a privilege, any sufficient argument why we, of all nations of those days, should have thus taken heart, unfolded mind, and thenceforward changed places with them in the career of civilization? "They are brought down and fallen; but we are risen, and stand upright. Oh, let us remember the name of the Lord our God."—(Psalm xx. 8.)

II. The second civil war arose out of the usurpation of Henry IV., which the nation sanctioned with too ready a consent. The evil for which the remedy was thus sought, was, without

doubt, great; and the country had become more sensible of disgrace in proportion to the glory which the long and brilliant reign of Edward III. had won for it. A weak and, it may be said, mischievous youth, gathering around him loose favourites, and bringing the country into a continually lower state of degradation from a late palmy state both of war and of trade, stood contrasted with a near kinsman, able, of mature years, ripened wisdom, large experience. Good was set before the people, inviting them to quit the evil plight into which the reckless youth had brought them. And in their eagerness to attain it, they did not stay to consider whether it was just to depose and punish irredeemably one who had from his father and grandfather, not only so good a title, but also such strong claims upon their gratitude, no less than duty, for all the kind forbearance that they could show, and who was yet of an age that allowed of amendment, and had actually exhibited qualities which should have reminded them of

his ancestry, and recommended him to a more patient trial before he was driven from the stage, on which, young as he was, he might still display them. They should have pondered all this well before they committed themselves to the perilous step of changing the succession, and running the hazard of a civil war. But the good was close at hand in fact, the evil was afar off in speculation. Impatient, therefore, of the evil which they were enduring from another, they committed evil of themselves, that good might come, and thinking to sow domestic peace, reaped a civil war for their harvest.

The sufferings were long and great. Nearly ninety years, reckoned from the day of Richard's deposition, had to run their course before the former security returned; and the last thirty-three of these ran through a stream of blood. The progress, also, of true learning and pure religion, which had begun among us, was rudely stopped by the compact which the usurper was compelled to make with the

Church, seriously alarmed as it had become at the light which was beginning to reveal its unfaithfulness. And yet we can look unto God, and acknowledge that such check was seasonable. The hour had not yet come for the opening of the flower of such excellent knowledge. So it was ordered that it should be kept back in the bud by rude weather, where it was safe; rather than be cut down, by one bitter frost, in its bloom, after its colour and scent had been declared, as in Italy and Spain.

The war, moreover, was directed, as its cause was also suggested, too much by the selfish motives of parties and favourites, thus approaching rather to the French than the English type. But God did not so utterly abandon us as He did France, for there was left so much public principle that the results were not ruinous nor even negative, for they issued in nothing worse than the destruction of the baronial tyranny. And, although inordinate power was thus brought to the crown,

the commons felt the relief from the one, and enjoyed security rather than endured oppression under the other. Meanwhile, that power was necessary to effect, in due time, the grand measure from which the nation's prosperity has sprung, for the Reformation could not have been carried without it. The Church had made her bargain with the Lancastrian usurpers, little dreaming of the consequences which were to come out of its seeming success. For this war completed that work in which, through her crusades, she had been so prosperous already; namely, her enrichment and power out of the ruin of the estates and power of the old nobility. She now, therefore, stood face to face, with nothing intervening, in front of the crown. Such a position rendered a combat inevitable. Accordingly, it came on at the first opportunity that offered, and that was on the side of the crown, which now found itself quite powerful enough to offer battle in so new and perilous a warfare.

But in the destruction of the aristocracy of

that day, we also recognize the hand of the Lord in raising up its remnant, in an aristocracy which has practically survived all the aristocracies of Europe. For while they have become but ornaments to the court, and useless to the state—to the true interests of which they are considered hostile by the people—with us they form a necessary intermediate class in our constitution. They are the counsellors of the king, and the representatives also of the people; and they contribute to form that middle class which nowhere else exists, though it be an essential element of pure and lasting liberty, fed with blood from above, and with bone from below, and forming thus the very juncture of the frame of the nation. Here, again, under the favour of the Almighty, we are, indeed, a peculiar people.

This war, moreover, by diverting our attention and abstracting our resources from our government in France, caused us the loss of that country, and the severance of a connection which never could have allowed of any approach

to the place which our country is now filling among the kingdoms of the world ; and thus it was set free to the exercise of its high calling in the Church of God, for the service of his kingdom of heaven. To such a termination did the Lord bring this second and seemingly most unmeaning and hopeless of civil wars. Long it was, and, as to outward appearances, miserably withering ; yet, intrinsically, it was very much like one of those seasons which our country often experiences from his hand in the natural world. A dry cold, which seemed to be consuming the juices of vegetable life, gives place to a balmy glow of warmth which awakes all nature from its deathlike sleep, and in the more vigour for the harder and longer constraint. With the reign of Henry VII. the sun and wind began to impart their genial influence, and, under his magnificent son, our country began to burst forth into that prodigal blossom of external prosperity, which has been the earnest of the temporal blessings which have distinguished its modern history. The soil,

well harrowed indeed, was tempered and prepared for the plant of the Reformation, and the days of the contempt of learning among the upper ranks, and of the lazy love of ignorance among the lower, had begun their departure. A blessed end was approaching.

But how easily might this trying period have come to a different end, as the like has in other countries. More easily might we not say : for surely the end was anything but the object of the struggle of the parties in the State, and anything but the object of the prayers of the parties in the Church, which amid the miserable distraction lifted up her suppliant voice from cathedral, abbey, and chancel. Unless, at least, the barons could be sealing the destruction of their own power, and the Church desiring the downfall of its own supremacy. All tokens seemed indeed to tell contrarywise. But He brought all to pass “who formed our country from the womb, that frustrateth the tokens of the liars, and maketh diviners mad ; that turneth wise men backward, and maketh their

knowledge foolish.”—(Isaiah, xliv. 29.) Oh, when we have once gained the sight of his outstretched hand, how do all the hands of men seem to hang down in utter helplessness. Such good brought He out of the evil of our second civil war! But we have still more wonderful mercies to acknowledge from the consequences which his will assigned to the third.

III. We have already alluded to the manner in which the despotic power which had now come into the hands of the sovereign enabled him to subdue the presumption of the Church. With the nation at his back, he entered upon a contest in which it cannot be denied that much evil was done that good might come. Judicial murder, iniquitous confiscation, and shameless spoliation, barbarous executions—committed and retaliated amid the profession of the name of true religion among us—distinguish the period in which were sown the sure seeds of another civil strife. And the very vigour of the arm of the Tudors, which kept down the growing evil, only concentrated

its inward strength, so that it should burst forth with a fury which readily surmounted the constraining power of their feeble successors. The train of evil, sought with the plea of good, exhibiting the contention of injustice done by one party to maintain power in order to continue an old tried state of things with injustice done by another to obtain power for the purpose of introducing a new and untried state of things, led to the outbreak of the third grand civil war, the result of which, strained through some quiet succeeding changes, is the present condition of the nation.

It is not therefore necessary, as it seemed before, to describe that result. Let us but look to the state of the nation in 1642, when it was on the eve of those troubles, and compare it with its position at this day, and we shall not fail of seeing the Lord's arm revealed in our favour most wonderfully in the change. For let us compare the progress of any other power of that day during the same period. After long and dreadful sufferings France is little

better off, if at all, than she was under Louis XIV. Spain has but within a few years been raising her head at all out of the mire of degradation which had even then begun. The German Empire has vanished; while its old core, the Austrian dominion, is torn with intestine discord. Holland has sunk into insignificance. The Northern powers are reposing in a gentle but manifest decline. But we, like Israel of old—(Deut. viii. 2)—have had our reverses for proof and trial on the road to promotion, and full of hair-breadth escapes though they have been, they have brought us into a security and strength unknown elsewhere, and have assured every well-informed and religious mind with the comfort that the Lord our God has been, and still is, dwelling with his most gracious favour amongst us.

CHAPTER X.

*On God's Deliverance of England from the
Consequences of Civil War.*

BUT the merciful goodness of God has not stopped here, but done a perfect work with us. Besides bringing good indirectly out of evil, He has also directly delivered us from evil. In this point of view let us prolong the contemplation of our civil wars.

They bring with them two classes of dangers, one threatening the external independence of the country, the other its internal freedom.

I. As to the former, we may observe that nations, not being bound by any code of social ties one to the other, have so little notion of any principle of duty towards their neighbours, as to regard the hour of their weakness as the very opportunity of their own aggrandizement,

and the display of their riches as the best argument for gainful robbery. Thus, at this day of boasted civilization, and with all the advantage of conventional warrant, established by long experience of its benefits, the nations of Europe do not trust each other at all further than they can help. Civil war, therefore, presents an opportunity which is hardly ever wilfully suffered to pass fruitless away by neighbours, and that, moreover, is not only commonly recklessly presented, but even earnestly offered by one of the parties, at least, imploring their interference. Hence, it is often the especial work of one power which has designs upon another to lay studiously the materials of civil strife within its bosom by political intrigue, and then to interfere by invitation of the discontented party which it has raised. In a powerful and ambitious neighbourhood, therefore, the independence of a country is continually at stake, and in proportion to the laxity of its internal constitution. Accordingly, we cannot wonder at, if indeed we can lament, the fate of Poland.

It is, indeed, a detestable policy, and yet no nation has ever arrived at a place of commanding power without exercising it. And our own conduct under our Plantagenet kings towards France in ancient times, and that imputed to us towards the princes of India in modern times, exhibits our own country among the examples. The position of Macedon in the Greek world produced a sedulous cultivation of the art, to the exercise of which in the broad region of the known world the Roman succeeded, and continued it with hateful perseverance of hideous perfidy as a national policy down to the time of her last permanent conquests, among which came that of our own island.

Great, therefore, indeed, was the merciful providence of God in granting us an escape out of this peril. In the first of the forementioned wars the continental possessions of our kings, which were of themselves more than equal to the extent of the France of the day, were sufficient to occupy the attention of that power,

while she had not a sovereign so scrupulous as St. Lewis. The barons did, indeed, begin their quarrel with John by setting up Lewis, the son of Philip, against him on English ground. But before he could make due advantage of so open an opportunity, and establish his throne, God removed John by death, and the nation became one again under his son, settled its differences without an umpire, and finally closed under his grandson a dispute which might have brought her independence into imminent danger from her neighbour, whose watchful eye set upon her never slept, but was now happily more intent on the spectacle which England was exhibiting on her continental territory than on what she was doing at home.

And here again we see the hand of God with us. The continental dominions of our sovereigns served as outworks, and absorbed the attention of France until the crisis of our native weakness was past. This benefit is especially manifest in the course of our second civil war. France was so well satisfied with the

prospect of clearing her own soil of the hold which our invasion had established upon it, that she never arrived at seriously meditating retaliation beyond our continental possessions, and the conquest of them so fully occupied her that she never came in time to tread our own soil. It is quite frightful to think what might have happened to England during her long state of anarchy had France been in a condition to attack her on her own soil.

During the third there was another neighbour, safely despised, if, indeed, generally known among us during the second. Spain had risen to a towering height, and in a relation especially menacing to England; but she had begun to decline, and had too much lost sight of her ancient enemy to care about her condition, even had her difficulties allowed her leisure. Meanwhile, France also had enough to do with her own troubles. But had Richelieu lived a little later, so as to have had his hand in the confusion which his intriguing head had already contributed to engender among us, or

had Lewis XIV. come to that post of power which he gained on the continent a little sooner, so as to have exercised his energetical and pernicious interference in our divisions, our liberty had hardly emerged from such desperate difficulties. But behold, again, the gracious hand of our Lord. The crisis of our last great civil strife forms a parenthesis between these two perilous periods.

II. As to the damage to internal freedom, that is most readily and certainly incurred, as it is with great difficulty, if ever, repaired. Wearied out with the unintermitted buffeting of troubles, affrighted at the desperate and cruel spirit of growing lawlessness, disgusted at the triumph of the wicked and prostration of the good, deprived by time and fate of war of its trustworthy heads of counsel, and sore with the repeated abuse of its confidence by one leader after another, as they latterly rose up to the top of the agitation, the nation is fain to hail him who has supplanted all such pretenders as its deliverer from its misfortunes, and to

throw itself into his arms with all the ardour of a desperately blind assurance of relief. Of such deliverers, Augustus, Cromwell, and Napoleon I., are memorable examples. Under such there is usually an emergence into the bright sunshine of military glory, the military ardour having been incited by domestic success to foreign conquest, for which ever so little unavoidable interference during the past difficulties always furnishes a specious excuse. But all falls shortly into gloom again, like all unnaturally vivid gleams shot upon things of this earth.

Perhaps, also, the reigning dynasty has, for like reasons, and in the person of one who has survived the troubles, received an inordinate accession to its power. Such did Lewis XIV. receive from the wars of the Fronde: such did the Tudors receive from the wars of the Roses: and such might Charles II. have received at the Restoration, if he had not only cared to understand his position, but also possessed the energy to put to account its advantages. Even as it was, he attained enough to show

how much more he might have attained. Where, then, had our present boasted liberties been, if an ambitious, politic king, of equally popular qualities, and natural cleverness, had stood in his place, and been succeeded by his likeness : still more if that likeness had reached the third generation, as in the case of the Norman kings ? But Charles exactly, at that time, sufficed for the post which Providence seemed to have assigned to his family in England, which was the negative one of working out a period of transition, through the overstraining of the old system, so that it should be weak in resistance to the new ; of bringing antiquity into disgrace and dislike, so that it should give place to the novelty of the times, through substituting favourites for counsellors between them and the people, and isolating royalty from its only trustworthy supports ; through acting, even when apparently successful, but with the resistance of a dam which pounds the waters up till they form the irresistible stream that turns the mill, and thence-

forward regularly and daily tempers the motion of its machinery.

And now, after all these perils to our liberties, we are become free—as never yet has been the rest of Europe, or promises ever yet to be. We stand alone. After all their manifold and violent struggles, the French are still floundering in the meshes of that iron net of tyranny which was forged for the use of Lewis XIV. by the troubles of the League and the Fronde. Their Revolution has but more surely entangled the heads which had thought to thrust themselves through. But we are free from the thralldom of the Tudors, from the tight yoke of Cromwell, from the last galling fetter of the old chain which was so heedlessly reassumed at the restoration of the Stuarts. Thanksgiving, blessing, and glory be ascribed to the merciful and almighty hand of the Lord our God, which has overruled for us all evil, and directed towards us all good. We are free amid the wreck of all the freedom that ever has been, and is now, bestrewing in miser-

able heaps the political ground of Europe. We are risen and stand upright, while they are brought down and fallen.

But God has made us free, and not we ourselves. God has sped us on our course from that starting point at which we once stood abreast with France and Spain. For they had also their borough-towns, their general assembly of states, and other elements of freedom, but never were gifted with the opportunities of bringing them up to the condition of our Lords and Commons: nor, in spite of much earnest endeavour, has a permanent state of freedom been reached up to this moment; while the former of these two classes seems less likely than ever to be present and regulate the fits of speed of the other. In fact, the stage of society is irrevocably past by which can be introduced those natural and gradually formed combinations of its elements, out of which alone true and lasting freedom is composed. The old man cannot recall the freshness and deeds of youth, and when he affects

to be young only exhibits folly, if not wickedness.

To some, indeed, the vote of council and the sword of battle may appear to have had all to do in the work. And they may deduce a train of cause and consequence through which it was accomplished. But the one is often as weak as the other is wild, and we still have to ask who put that sword and that vote into the due order and course of effect, and gave it room for ensuring the desired end—who duly tempered the madness of the one with the wisdom of the other, or, when that wisdom in speciousness was but folly in essence, overruled it to good? Surely He, to whom we should confess, in the words of his own people, “It was not our own sword, nor our own arm that saved us: but the Lord’s right hand, and his arm, and the light of his countenance, because He had a favour unto us”—(Psalm xliv. 3)—He trained up, as we have seen, our national character, so that it should have especial qualities, such as a clear eye for discerning opportunities,

and a firm and ready hand for laying hold of them. But other nations have but dimly seen, and, therefore, also feebly handled. So it has come to pass that, among ourselves, civil war, instead of leaving hideous scars and brand-marks upon us, as on the accursed, in the manifold exhibition of some odious form of tyranny, has eventually added to the strength and beauty of our stature of freedom, and that which seemingly came to curse has left us a substantial blessing behind it. Glory and thanks again to the King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

III. A third evil bequeathed by civil war, and which plays into the hands of the two foregoing, as they also return the play, is the dissolution of the moral and religious spirit of the country. Men become so reckless as to shrink from no violence or fraud which shall promise the destruction of the opposite party; and where in a house five are divided, three against two, and two against three, the domestic ties, which form the bond of all principle,

are destroyed.—(Luke xix. 52.) Where the war involves also religious party, the mischief is incalculably increased, inasmuch as it has fixed itself upon the very core of the national heart. It comes to pass in time, that all strict religion is deemed to be hypocrisy, and that the best token of sincerity is unbelief. But bad as it was with us, this internal evil was much aggravated by the external influence of the dissolute character of the restored family, who introduced the vices which civil war had brought to a head in France to the company of the vices which they found grown up, from a like cause, here. Thus our country came in for a double portion, and the degradation was deep indeed.

We have already described its principal features, and may add that the popular literature of that day, with its hitherto unnational infidelity and impurity, bears testimony to the sad change which had now come upon the hearts of the grandchildren of the hearty and healthy subjects of Elizabeth, and turned their modest

self-respect into open shamelessness. That the nation ever rose up again from such a mire strikes with thankful wonder all readers of such literature, and impresses them with a lively sense of the extreme peril of the times. One of the remarkable features of their complexion, though indeed a natural one, is the apathy and want of public spirit which had been produced, and prevailed so long afterwards. How, then, was a deliverer to emerge above such a dead level, and restore the nation to its former place? Conspiracies were formed, but who could sympathize with such conspirators? Even battle took place. But who and what was there to fight for, when a nation rough-ridden by Cromwell had learned to distrust victory, and been reduced by sad experience to cling faster to the substance of the reigning family, govern how it would, rather than follow the shadow of an usurper, however able he might have shown himself? It would risk almost any cost of liberty.

The doomed infatuation of that family came under God to the rescue. James would not

allow his subjects, however willing, to remain indifferent to their own cause, or ignorant of what he was preparing for them. He drove them to look abroad for that which they could not find at home. Overpowered at last with the conviction of the general danger, men returned to mutual confidence, prepared to embark on the old perils rather than undergo what now threatened them. And though the spirit was cold which had confronted his father, and bidden armies spring up, as it were, from the ground against him, and supplied them with able and dauntless leaders; and though the people had become indifferent and unwarlike, as they always do after so deep exhaustion of hope and spirit as civil war commonly produces; and though an encamped army waited on the orders of the sovereign, they only the more eagerly directed their eyes towards such help as could be found beyond the sea.

There another indispensable step was laid for them by God's kind providence. The

marriages of the daughters of the royal house furnished a supply to fill the throne, and rule the land, with the least departure from old and good precedent. But the house of Savoy, which now mingled in its veins the blood of Charles I., had as yet offered anything but a favourable augury, and in that age was distinguishable for nothing so much as for the persecution of the Vaudois. There was, however, through divine mercy, a nearer line still than this. William the Stadtholder, himself a grandson of Charles I., had drawn the alliance closer by marrying the daughter of James : and she, as well as himself, was a Protestant. To him therefore all eyes were now directed. But the Lord's merciful provision went further still. He had not only supplied the connection, but had also prepared the man. For if he had inherited from the Stuarts an indecisive character, had he lacked talent and judgment, had he wanted the patience and foresight of dearly bought experience, and been unused to camp and counsel, had he not combined

several qualities which are seldom found together, had he not, in short, utterly belied all his Stuart blood, he might indeed have readily answered the call, but never could have fulfilled the requirement. He would but have renewed the disastrous failure of Monmouth.

But neither did the arm of the Lord stop here in its gracious supply. He further provided the opportunity of action. William's attention was not at this crisis taken up with his perilous and all but continual warfare with Lewis XIV.; but on the contrary he was enjoying the security afforded by the league of Augsburg, and had moreover a most excellent plea for his warlike preparations on the ground of the ambitious restlessness of Lewis, which was so formidable as to blind the Pope to a clear sight of his own interest in the fortunes of James, and make him slow to check what affected to be directed against the covetous pride of one before whom he had been compelled to humble himself: and thus was produced the strange sight of the champion of

popery being abandoned by the Pope himself. Was not the Lord's hand here, indeed, in a condition of things so unexpected, so unnatural to the parties concerned in it?

But further still remains another necessary step in mounting to this great success. In addition to the strengthening of one party came the weakening of the other. Such was the infatuation of James, so had his arbitrary disposition and self-conceit, with unfounded reliance on the devotion of his agents and the goodness of his cause, blinded his eyes that they should not see, and closed his ears that they should not hear, that he would not listen to the noise of preparations which were echoing throughout Europe. And such was the ill-fortune that seconded it, when he awoke to the necessities of his situation, that his fleet, which might have gone forth and ruined the enterprise of William at the last hour, was detained in the Thames by the wind which was conducting the adverse armament straight to a convenient landing-place upon our shores.

Surely, on such a review, it is impossible for a heart truly believing in Almighty God's direction of the affairs of this world, not to see it steering the ark of our deliverance amid the shoals of so great improbabilities of success. Such then, under his goodness, was our escape from the perils brought on by the injuries inflicted on our state of society by the great civil war.

But the end was not even yet. The mere visible escape is far from being the termination of the trial. It is commonly but the grand earnest of the blessedness of the final deliverance. The injury done to society still exists, and works, like the broken weapon inclosed in a healed wound, rankling in proportion to the size and sharpness of point remaining in it. And when the first and great danger is past, a nation is very apt to think that its troubles are over, and to fall back into much of its former carelessness. So was it with England, and we have to proceed in amazement at the indifference with which the people looked on

when their liberty was again threatened, and became the stake for which the game of war was again played upon their soil. If a sense of security was a cause of the indifference, it must also have been an effect. The grandson of James was allowed to march more than half way from Edinburgh to London, and ever as he came on, the people, so far from interposing any hindrance, or retiring with their cattle and effects, poured forth in gaping crowds to gaze at him, with much the same stupid curiosity as the Roman provincials exhibited of old, when a pretender to the Empire was marching through their neighbourhood to assume the purple at Rome.

The view thus presented to our minds is truly appalling; the exposure of the helpless apathy of our country is truly humiliating. There can be little doubt that many favourers of the cause, who had made a convenience of it while it was weak, grew terrified when it showed strength, and for this, as well as for still more selfish reasons, kept studiously

quiet. But what an unaccountable palsy had come upon even its staunch adversaries! Again man is found utterly wanting to the help of the fortunes of his country. Again God rose to save, and chilled with indifference the hearts of the invaders who had been led far beyond the narrow range of their sympathy and speculation, and they turned their backs on London while it lay open with its vast treasures and unwarlike population before them. He subdued also to a timely spirit of caution the French, who had been assembled in great force on the opposite coast, ready to burst the blockade, and invade at the first favourable moment. And He infused the spirit of good counsel and vigour into our captains and soldiers, who pursued and pressed the foe, until they took him in his last retreat.

So set the last day of the lamentable weakness brought upon England by the evil influence of her last civil war. God fought for us. Nothing but his merciful providence could have threaded our fortunes through the

entanglement of such a series of disasters. But from that day He began to raise the nation up to an assured position, and to reward her twofold for all her disgraces. After fifteen years she who had trembled for her own soil had added all North America to her territory, had begun her career of empire in India; and, for the first time since the days of Elizabeth, her king stood at the head of a loyal people, united in heart and mind; and, for the first time in her long history, if we except a brief manifestation in the reign of Henry VIII., found himself master of the politics of Europe.

Then were ended, and not sooner, so by the arm of God, and not of man, the evils of our last civil war. May his mercy ever prevent another. But if it should come, it is too likely to present the type of the advanced stage of civilization in which we are living, and to produce results similar to those of the civil wars under the Roman empire, or those of the French Revolution, or those which are

now so frightfully undoing so much and long-admired work in America. God alone can infuse a spirit which shall counteract that of the age of the world at which we are arrived. Therefore to Him let us go, accustom our ear to his summons to duty, use his gifts with faithfulness of stewardship, remember his cause, making it our own in all our counsels, endeavour to spread the knowledge of his glory throughout that vast extent of this earth which He has assigned for the ground of the operation of our bounden duty and service. Then, amid all the shocks of this quaking world, we shall stand steady, for He will be the Lord our God, and we shall be His people.

CHAPTER XI.

On the Deliverance from the Dangers of Invasion.

FOR a long and dreary period after the fall of the Roman empire had removed the barrier with which it had so long checked barbarian emigration, Britain resembled one of the rocks on her own sea-shore, which are daily washed over by the tide. Wave after wave brought a horde to cover her land, which had not given quiet settlement to one before it was followed by another ; so that, what with intestine war among the people who had arrived, and what with the desolating course of those who were arriving, six centuries of miserable insecurity elapsed before the last invader arrived, and the vigour of Norman rule compressed into one mass all that were within, and deterred with its regulated front of for-

midable might all that were without. Thus this invasion, the first made since the days of the Cæsars with a disciplined army of a foreign Power, began also, like that of Claudius, a new era in the history of the island, as elevating it out of the condition of barbarous confusion into that of a civilized country. Freedom was, indeed, as formerly, the price immediately paid down for the benefit. Yet it was cheaply bought; for how worthless was that freedom, which was but barbarian anarchy, and, therefore, full of oppression; and how precious the benefit, which was the introduction of regular government, and of security of rights. And it was God's gracious pleasure that the benefit should on this last occasion take deep root, and grow up strong in the land, for never has it, down to this day, been disturbed by another invasion. There has even been amply repaid long before this time the purchase-money of that freedom, valued though it were at very much more than it ever, in the best times, had been intrinsically worth.

And yet the situation of our island is such as to expose its inhabitants at all times peculiarly to such a danger, and to place their independence in jeopardy during every hour of unwatchfulness. Unless she be mistress of the surrounding sea, she is at the mercy of her neighbours, and may, on any day, become their slave. And if she rely too much upon being mistress she may neglect her internal defence, and thus become an easy conquest by the sudden accident of the vigilance of her fleets being eluded, if not of their force being overcome. Not to say that the same spirit which should neglect her external defence would most assuredly look very insufficiently to her internal. Nothing, therefore, but an unwearied spirit of watchfulness, such as will proceed from the earnest prayer and dutiful service of the nation to its Lord God, can be effectual in preserving her amid such a continual state of peril. The ocean, which seems at first sight such a defender, presents also the ready means of pouring on our shores

an enemy unfatigued by marches, unweakened by hunger, unthinned by sword, unlimited in number. And while she lies open to attack throughout her whole length—from the continent on one side, and from the ocean on the other—her narrow breadth scarcely affords sufficient space through which to retreat and recruit in case of being repulsed, instead of having repulsed. Nor is there any friendly country with its boundary open in her rear to support her in such extremity. Such a situation seems insecurity itself. And yet she has enjoyed security, in the face, too, of nations mighty by sea and by land, for eight hundred years down to this day.

What natural food she thus seems for all the rapine of war, for all the monstrous confusion and wild barbarism with which the overflow of a wide and agitated continent may visit her. And yet such importations as have hitherto reached her have proved harmless at least, and, in most respects, beneficial. The joyous crowns and wreaths of civilization have ridden

the top of the wave, and been wafted upon our shores, while the heavy calamities which destroyed kingdoms there have sunk in the deep on the way towards us. Thus we have reached our present stability of national character, of political constitution, of imperial position. In our comparative loneliness, for which our lively neighbours mock us, we have grown up with all the advantages of a large family which has been compelled to depend on its own resources, and has taught its members to make the most of mutual help and service. We have found within ourselves a common centre to our affections, hopes, and endeavours. And thus the public weal has been the general object, and has manifestly involved our individual interest. A strong family likeness, inward and outward, has grown up, such that shame is his that is ashamed of it: and all are united in bonds—not of that showy and boastful nationality which France and America are too apt to exhibit, and sometimes most offensively to proclaim—but of sound patriotism, the more

quiet and unconscious from the very reality and central seat of the feeling, which thus makes a part of our moral constitution. And it is continually exercised in the busy intercourse which must ensue upon the common enjoyment of so much acknowledged good.

Let us now turn from this view to the continent. We shall not then fail of being struck with the preciousness of the privilege which has been accorded to us. There we see no growth of centuries of liberty: but, on the contrary, the fruit, which has ripened through our advantages on this secluded soil, has been cruelly nipt, as by frost, in the blossom, by interruptions from the action of close inseparable neighbours. For example, how much damage has France thus suffered. She was even ahead of us at one time, as, for instance, in the rise of the commonalty. But she enjoyed no such quiet as ours for nursing the privilege. For not less than four hundred years she suffered from the continental neighbourhood of our restless Norman and Plan-

tagenet kings on one side, while her attention was at the same time demanded for the security of all the other parts of her wide and open frontier. Thus her institutions were deprived of the opportunity of quiet and steady internal growth by continual agitation from without, to say nothing of her being a growing aggregation of provinces with separate constitutions which also forbade all such central growth as ours. From this latter hindrance our insular position, securing the union produced by the pressure of the Norman conquest, effectually freed us. In no case is the proverb of the rolling stone gathering no moss more true than in the case of the constitution of a nation which is subject to a state of continual commotion. Besides, the constitutions themselves of bordering States cannot but occasionally clash, as did those of Belgium and France not so long ago, when their laws concerning the press were found opposed. And thus, independently of many other causes, they stunt mutual growth.

Now, all our prudence and all our provision,

all our philosophy and all our legislation, could never have done all this for us. For our blessed exemption from the continental lot has arisen, not from our having bravely repelled an invader, so much as from not having had any invader to resist. Even our perilous periods of domestic weakness and dissension invited, as we have seen, no invader. Surely we possessed no charm amid those fits which put to sleep the covetous ambition of our neighbours at such seasons of strong temptation. And that, too, through the varied chances and changes of centuries. But it was the Lord's doing, who ever supplied them with work at home, when they might have sought very gainful work on our soil. The only time that real danger threatened our shores was when we had all the necessary time and means for preparation against it.

A nation, however, may be strong at home ; stronger, perhaps, than ever before ; but another may be also stronger still, although weak before, and may be naturally seeking that expan-

sion of conscious strength which is experienced with so much enjoyment in making conquests. And such a time came to us, and we were threatened with such a visitation as this island, with all its ancient disasters, had never yet experienced. For the worst of those were like a flood which leaves fertilizing mud behind : while this would have been like that which leaves but barren sand and gravel, and in a layer so deep that nothing lovely, nothing profitable, will grow there again. For Spain, if victorious, would have reduced us to, at least, her own deplorable condition. How near her attack upon us came towards a successful end, and how a third great invasion, which would have exceeded its predecessors in cruelty, and infliction of immediate misery, undone every good which the Roman and Norman had imported in their evil, and substituted pure irrecoverable evil, was averted by means assuredly not in the nation's possession, we have now to consider, and to admire and adore the mercy of our Lord

God, who, almost at the last hour, interfered with his mighty arm to deliver us.

The Reformation found our national body full of youthful and generous strength. But the national mind had hardly grown in proportion. Thenceforward, however, it became conscious of its powers, and eager for the exercise of the adventurous spirit which now possessed it. A suitable object was prominently placed before it in the discovery of the New World. Set free to act in all the freshness of the experience of her energy, and so to make the most of the many precious and hitherto much neglected, yea, and even undiscovered, opportunities of the country, as well as of the many and wonderful which came to her from abroad at such a crisis, England equipped herself nobly, and sallied forth on her destined way over the ocean, and even before she had established a single colonial settlement of her own, but had interfered with a bold hand in those of others, she soon reached a station which set her at the head of the Protestant States, and thus

incurred at once the fierce political envy, and the unappeasable religious hatred of the great Powers, all of whom still abode in the communion of Rome. That an heretical Power should be so formidable was painful to them, but that its heresy should be the manifest cause of its signal rise was intolerable. Her treatment of the agents of Rome in their treasonable attempts against her peace and safety upon her own soil, infuriated their zeal, and all looked upon her as the ringleader of a rebellion against the laws of God and man, whom if they could subdue the victory over the rest was secured. But if they should leave her to grow, as she certainly would, in influence, their great and holy cause would be held in continued jeopardy. In particular, as she represented the new cause, so Spain represented the old, and her sovereign Philip, having been personally disgusted at the reception with which he met in England, and irritated at the utter loss of all the hold which he had endeavoured to retain of her, took upon himself to call her

to account for her crimes. And never was a man moved by stronger motives, either as to civil or religious pretension. In his ambition he would be king of kings to Europe, in his bigotry servant of servants to Rome. On the front and head of England's offence there stood at the bar her interference in the Netherlands. But she had also crowned her guilt by extinguishing in the execution of Mary Queen of Scots the last hope that could be entertained of her voluntary return to allegiance to the Holy See. The innumerable secret plots which had been continually contrived for undermining her power, were thenceforward to be succeeded by an open demonstration of terrible and certain vengeance.

But it was to be more terrible from the suddenness of the shot of the bolt. No declaration of war was made, but preparations were proceeding on a scale of such magnitude as Europe had never witnessed, and their extent and purpose were kept secret from the intended victim. For ensuring this object no vileness of

treachery was deemed unfair, but even seemed the fairer in proportion to the holiness of the cause, and the more spiritual for its greater foulness, as thus more fully contradicting the merely moral truth written in the natural heart of man. So deeply was the plot laid that even the sagacious and suspicious Elizabeth, who surely wanted no experience in such a matter, allowed her watchfulness to be lulled to such a degree, that her enemies would most assuredly have imputed to her an infatuation under divine judgment, if the armament had succeeded. Verily, considering the enormous stake, she was asleep, and with her England's most wary counsellors were asleep. They suffered themselves to be amused with idle tales, and that too by such a man as the Duke of Parma, and while the noise of the last preparations of this costly expedition was resounding throughout Europe, and all the Romish world were standing up tiptoe and agaze to see it, with heart if not with eyes, as it sailed forth, amid earnest prayer from all its altars sent up to ensure the success

of an object which already seemed secured by the utmost power which Church and State acting together could exert, and set beyond every chance of failure before heaven and earth.

Warmly would Sixtus V. now congratulate himself that the long and full desire of the heart of Paul III. was about to be accomplished. That Pope had earnestly proposed to the Emperor and French King to turn their arms away from the Turk to a crusade of blood and fire against heretical England. But here was a single agent with a heart far more interested in the work, with a force such as they would never have dreamed of assembling, and uncumbered moreover with a greedy partner, except indeed himself. "England's last hour is at hand," was the general cry. And verily it had been at hand, and had come to pass, had it depended upon the exertions of England. But One greater than England was interested in the matter, One the honour and glory of whose name was deeply concerned. The Lord

was at hand, his day of visitation was come: He arose in defence of her shores.

Great indeed seemed the inadequacy of her means when this mighty armament had arrived essentially unharmed at the intended scene of its grand achievement, and the wealth of the two crowns was singularly contrasted in their preparations, when the two hundred vessels, of vast size and admirable equipment, belonging to Philip, were met by but thirty ships of very inferior size and equipment belonging to Elizabeth. But as singular also was the contrast between the forces which represented the people. On Philip's side there were of course none. But on Elizabeth's side were arrayed private vessels which raised the whole number to about a hundred. Still with this addition, Elizabeth's fleet, however it might partially derange the wide and loose array of its adversary, could not possibly prevent the terrible danger of all, the arrival of the Spanish fleet in unbroken line at the Straits of Calais, where the Duke of Parma was waiting to join

its six thousand troops which were on board with seventeen thousand more, and be transported to the English shore quite ready to march upon London. All now seemed to depend upon the force which we could muster on land. And truly even at this day the review of it causes a shudder, a cold fit of shame and terror, which yields to a hot fit of thankful adoration of Him whose mighty arm was so manifestly outstretched to save and defend us in that hour of darkness.

Our army had not been so much as assembled. Lord Hunsdon's thirty-four thousand men were on paper, but not on the field. And of the twenty-three thousand men allotted to Leicester, not more than four thousand had yet joined his standard at Tilbury. Had, therefore, the designed junction taken place, the condition of our country had been desperate. It must have been no ordinary conjunction of difficulties which could have prevented the transport of the troops through so short a passage, in defiance of the

English navy, which had not yet seriously crippled the Armada. The plan hitherto pursued of following in annoyance would but make our navy a helpless witness to the attainment of the grand object of a disembarkation on our shores. And to receive them on their landing there was the most incapable general in Europe, at the head of four thousand raw troops, while they were commanded by the consummate general of his day, and amounted to twenty-three thousand veterans, the finest troops in Europe.

At this terrible crisis we received the return of the good services which we had rendered to the Protestant cause in the Netherlands. The vigilance of the Dutch fleet, more still than any demonstration of our own force, deterred the Duke from leaving port. And in the meanwhile "the heavens were black with clouds and wind"—(1 Kings xviii. 45)—and the storm arose which aided the fireships and attacks of the English, and drove the Armada out to the Northern sea, there to land her

dead, and not her living, on our coast, perishing miserably by a long train of shipwreck. And so England was saved almost in spite of herself: for so insanelly sparing had Elizabeth been, perhaps was compelled to be, of the revenues of the crown—the only constant national revenue of that day—that she ordered her fleet to be laid up in ordinary on the report of the dispersion of that of the enemy on its making its first start. And so ill had she provided the equipment of her fleet, such as it was, that in the pursuit northward from Calais, Lord Effingham was obliged to make a bold show that he may hide his want of ammunition.

But he would be writing a history who went further into the details of this memorable deliverance, in which the impulse of the Lord's hand was so great as to reverse at once the fortunes of the two nations, and that from that moment Spain sank miserably downwards, and England rose magnificently upwards, until in the early part of the third century after-

wards, she came from her own unviolated soil to rescue her old foe from invaders. The whole transaction is, indeed, a series of wonderful escapes from irremediable disaster, attesting to every devout mind a series of interferences of the Lord God of England. And if ever the inefficiency of force, and want of foresight in man testified to the success coming from God, surely it did here. Well did Elizabeth at the head of her people ascribe all to the goodness of God, and well may we at this day look up in thankful adoration to the Head of our Church, and see Him standing at the post of deliverance, convinced, as Fuller says, that if Philip's design had taken effect, neither Protestant Church in Britain had remained, nor history thereof been made at the present.—(*Church History*, ix. 15.)

About two years after this event, Elizabeth signed the charter of the East India Company. What an accumulation of Divine favour to our nation is contained in this simple statement. A population of five millions, fresh from deliver-

ance out of the most terrible jeopardy that could befall a nation, begins a career which, down to our time, has resulted in dominion over a country containing a hundred and fifty millions: and we are princes in a country which we entered as merchants. The mere mention of this should stir up our hearts to think out and feel the rest. And the testimony to it, shown in the spectacle wont to be exhibited in the days before the use of steam had altered all our marine arrangements, was, through its lively gloriousness, well suited to throw the rightly-informed and thankful mind upon a stirring retrospect. For the channel seen from our shores, filled with a crowd of enormous Indiamen—compared with one of which the largest in our fleet, in those days of Elizabeth, was not greater, if not less, than when compared with one of the giants of the Armada—called the heart back to read and consider the hearts of our forefathers, who had beheld that channel filled with a freight of destruction, and not of preservation; conveying a token of

slavery, and not a proof of dominion ; a threat of beggary, and not a promise of plenty. But that reading of the Lord's doings with us was then, as it were, in a manuscript read by few, and on its own especial spot. Now time has run on, the Lord's hand has shown itself in a long succession of mercies, his arm has been stretched out in deliverances from generation to generation ; and thus all has, as it were, been printed, to be read by every heart, on every spot of our island. Everywhere, to the intelligent, patriotic, and Christian Englishman, is a monument in some shape with some inscription, speaking to his heart, recording the grand work of the Lord our God with his fathers of old, when, to use the words of the inscription in which they signified the impression made on the tables of their hearts in the words borrowed of the Lord graven on the votive-table of the medal of brass—"The Lord blew on them. His enemies are scattered." The steamboat, announcing one of most extraordinary revolutions in the machinery of the defence of his

native shores, while it warns him of a new and untried course of perils, will also bid him be of good courage, and put his trust in that arm - which formerly so effectually delivered him, and see in the new invention a new instrument of new mercies.

But however forgetful in these later days too many may have become as to this eventful part of our national history, coming to the view of it through a long perspective of victories which have been greater, not only in appearance from effect of nearness, but in substance also ; yet there was one more enemy on the opposite shore, still more formidable than Philip, who in his day, so terribly eventful to us, kept steadily in mind the principle on which the Spaniard had based his enterprise, and had all but succeeded in it. That person was Napoleon I., and that principle was the occupation of the channel with a superior force, which might protect an armament in its passage across the straits. A much greater captain was he than the Duke of Parma, and was at the head of an

army seven-fold more numerous, and still more inured to victory, while ours was proportionally quite as deficient both in number and experience as before, and could not entertain more reasonable confidence in such generals as were likely to command. Few are now left who shared in the agitation of the days when that successful leader, whose name was familiar to every child amidst the first that he learned, lay encamped in our sight on the opposite shore, surrounded by a hundred and fifty thousand men, the future conquerors at Austerlitz, who had been carefully trained to embark at the shortest notice in the fleet which had been prepared to convey them on the first favourable opportunity to our shore. We were kept in a fever of continual alarm, and yet, great and imminent as seemed the danger, we knew not one-half of it at the time. The multitude of armed vessels which seemed to us the intended escort, was but the screen of an occupation of the channel with an unexpected and much more formidable escort to his innumerable transports. We had

indeed sealed up with a blockade Brest, Toulon, and the rest of his ports ; but yet not one of them so surely but that the fleet within, by eluding our watchfulness, or otherwise opening a way, could go and add so much force to that which had already been collected in another port as utterly to overmatch our squadron ; and thus, the whole contents of the ports being readily released, might occupy the channel at once, and keep it open long enough for accomplishing the whole undertaking. And to make all sure, he had contrived a deep plan for drawing our fleet away to a distance during the decisive moment.

But at the last hour God interfered, in the same way as He had done two centuries ago, when He cut off, at the point of starting, the able leader of the Armada, Santa Croce, and the man of mediocrity, Medina Sidonia, took his place. He cut off by fever Treville, the only officer intrusted with the plan, and there was appointed in his stead Villeneuve, unacquainted with the necessary detail, unequal to the skill and vigour which its successful

execution required, and, moreover, opposed to Drake, revived with an additional power of daring yet calculating spirit in Nelson. So the opportunity was lost, and the ensuing battle of Trafalgar forbade all chance of its recurrence.

It was, indeed, a hairbreadth escape, and not less so for the little noise which it made. No beacons were lighted on our hills, no troops were harangued by the sovereign on our shores. The Armada had been firing forth loud threats for upwards of a year. But this armament was advancing in dead silence itself under a counterfeited noise, which should divert our attention almost up to the very point where its charge was to explode in a thunderbolt of destruction. But even had this failed of its end, and the enemy been driven bootless back from our soil, still the charm of its inviolability, wound up by the prestige of eight hundred years, would have been broken, our national confidence would have been weakened, and that security which has enabled us freely

to expand in commerce and emigration over the face of the earth, would never have been attained. A fearful look back upon a possibly endangered home would have comparatively marred every prospect abroad, and crippled every movement on foreign ground.

Such was England's last peril as to invasion, such her deliverance from it. But the darkness of some hours of that period none of its now few remaining witnesses can ever forget. But if they have hearts penetrated with any due sense of the power and goodness of God, they will not fail, on every remembrance of them, to cry to God in the spirit of these words : "Thus broke He the arrows of the bow, the shield, the sword, and the battle." —(Psalm lxxvi. 3.) And surely the fathers belonging to that generation made good their public prayers, so often renewed amid national fasting and humiliation, as well as national triumph and thanksgiving, and declared unto their children "the noble acts which He did in their days, in the old time before them."

Nearly half a century has now passed since those threatened judgments were stayed, and those implored blessings were granted, and a course of uninterrupted security began. But, meanwhile, revolution has swept the continent, dynasties have risen and fallen; constitutions have been made and unmade; states have appeared and disappeared. And all this storm we have witnessed standing afar off in a calm, for the most part, and that far deeper and longer than has ever yet befallen this island. May it long continue. And may it not be our own fault if it do not continue. And may we seriously take the many hints which we have had, to put our trust in God, and not in man. At least, none ought to misunderstand the manifold signs which admonish us that we may once again, as on both those former occasions, come under the ban or the abandonment of all Europe. The offensiveness of the sight of our peculiar freedom to those who know it to be impossible with them; the hateful envy which is therefore entertained

against us by the continental professors of freedom, and that with a greater soreness for their having very signally failed in their attempts to attain it; and the detestation of our religious independence, which rankles in the heart of an active party in the communion of Rome—these may, at any moment, make the contrasted parties join in common cause against us; and, perhaps, it is chiefly the difficulty of finding a common head to so uncommon a conspiracy that delays the trial. Should it come (which the Lord avert!), terrible it must be; inasmuch as no hatred can be compared for intensity with the combined hatred against a third of two parties which naturally hate one another; for it must, therefore, be unnatural. Something of this we see on the smaller scale of the temper of all parties in France towards us. The wrath, too, is greater still from the consciousness that the time is short before they must turn their arms against one another.

Let us, therefore, have faith in God only.

Faithful and thankful service to Him that hath called us is the tenure by which we hold the land which He has given us, that we might possess it without fear of enemies, and leave it to generation after generation, an inheritance such as Almighty God has never granted to a nation before, and to be prolonged into distant ages, to the welfare of England, to the edification of the world, and to the honour and glory of his name amongst men.

CHAPTER XII.

On the Providential Union of the British Kingdoms.

So small is the space on earth over which sufficient uniformity can be found for close and lasting agreement among men, that no nation has ever grown up into much political importance by force of its own original population and territory only. But that has formed the centre around which others, compelled by various external fortunes, rather than moved by concordant minds, have been aggregated in course of time, become mingled into the same body, accepting its fundamental constitution of law and language, and imparting likewise to it, in time, something, if not much, from their own. Ancient Rome, even as contained in the basin of the Tiber, is a notable example.

To which may be added France in the seventeenth century as compared with France in the eleventh. When the result of the union has manifestly been some augmentation of the means of the progress of the kingdom of heaven upon earth, there is room given, and a desire excited, for tracing out the work of his hand, which binds peoples and looses them according to the service which He requires. It is here, then, that is found the grand object of the study of the Christian politician. Hence he enters into the sanctuary of the house of the Lord within his own heart, that place for understanding ends, and sees and hears things which worldly politicians see but by outward signs, and hear but by distant sounds, and therefore can never understand, if they do not always misunderstand.—(Psalm lxxiii. 17.) In this mind let us consider how providentially our British islands have been brought to form one nation, and to exchange the miserable weakness of divided parts for the unassailable strength of the whole.

Though formally united to England so late as the beginning of this century, Ireland was partially annexed so early as in the reign of Henry II., about a century after the Norman conquest. But during the interval, so loosely did she cohere, as often to have been a cause of serious entanglement to England's operations, and of impediment to her success, and, instead of contributing to her security, to have been an object of continual care lest her associate should bring her more weakness than strength. Nevertheless, we can recognize here the operation of God's providential favour. Broken into fragments we found her, and so by fragments were enabled to attach her. But what if, on the contrary, we had found her not a type of our late heptarchy, but as consolidated as England herself had become under the race which sent forth Strongbow? It seems likely, in the first place, that she would have maintained her independence as sturdily as did Scotland. And, in the next place, that, even if she had lost it, yet in that

her entire state she might have remained in the form of a dependent kingdom, and succeeded in regaining independence by taking advantage of the distance and uncertainty of communication with the English government, and seizing the opportunities of the dissensions and perplexities of England. Nor would the aboriginal population alone have been ready to forego the connection. For the conquerors, in the course of a generation or two, we are told, smacked so much of the savour of their adopted soil as even to out-Irish the Irish. But it was the Lord's pleasure that it should be otherwise, and that a conquest, nominally entire, and seemingly shortly made, should be actually imperfect and gradual, and so leave the English colony to such struggles as rendered it dependent for existence on the mother country, and retained her hold upon the land.

Thus England was eased from a most perilous situation. For although, in her early days, an Irish kingdom could not certainly

have had such direct influence on her fortunes as had the Scottish, yet it would not have been long behind the other in being an embarrassment to her in her later continental communications, by becoming an instrument for the hand of her enemies to employ against her. Wedged thus between these two kingdoms, how miserably crippled must she have been in power. And what a fine game would France and Spain have been enabled to play against her; the first, probably, having Scotland in hand, the second Ireland; and how bravely might they have finished it by their sharing the booty of all three between them.

Therefore, supposing Ireland to have maintained herself as an independent kingdom, or to have been conquered, but to have retained the old form of an independent kingdom, in which case, if she did not successfully rebel amid our many distractions, she might loyally have retained on her throne the family of one of our deposed kings, in either case England

must, as in the case of Scotland, have sought and awaited the opportunity of a matrimonial alliance for the union of the two crowns. But it would have come slower, if it came at all, inasmuch as the more complete severance of the countries by nature would both more indispose the minds of the Irish towards it, throw them further within the range of the influence of foreign powers, and make it still more an object with France and Spain to attach to themselves a country which was near enough for deadly annoyance, and yet far enough out of reach for them to play it as their instrument, and easily retain it when once connected. In such a case Ireland might at this moment have been, under the rule of a peculiar royal family, a country as foreign to us as are France and Spain, and, from very neighbourhood, and from consciousness of England's more natural and proper claim of connection, only more hostile still in spirit.

On the other hand, had Scotland been appropriated to England in a like fragmentary

state, she would have profited as little by so distant a government, while her rebellions would have been not only very troublesome, but vitally dangerous. Irish turbulence had not a line of land to run upon, and reach England like a train of fire. An intermediate sea about sixty miles broad was a sure and effectual extinguisher. But Scottish would have run continuously towards England on land, and quickly reached provinces ever ready to take fire, as not being yet thoroughly reconciled either in interest or in affection to the sway of the southern sceptre, and would have invited or assisted continual invasions of England from France, either immediately across the sea, or through descents upon the north.

But Scotland had been united into one kingdom about the same time as England; and before England's kings had time to diversify their eager eastern views with northern, she had taken her place among the recognized kingdoms of Europe. In order therefore to

effect the beneficial purpose of bringing the whole island under one government, there remained but the rude and hopeless undertaking of subduing a warlike united people covering a most rugged and difficult country, or the patiently awaiting the opportunities presented by the gentle course of time and fortune, which might unite the crowns by matrimony. The former was tried by Edward I., and failed signally under his son. And even had it succeeded, our civil wars would have given occasion for rebellion, and however the countries may have been reunited, there must have remained down to this hour a dangerous feeling of national disaffection between us.

The reward of patience was long in coming, but came at last, the more effectual for the delay, and especially happy in the circumstance of the monarch of the weaker country succeeding to the throne of the stronger, and thus saving all offence to the proud spirit of his countrymen. And especially does it show the interference of God's gracious favour. For

Mary, the mother of this monarch, had been married to Francis II. of France, and carried her kingdom across the sea with her. What if, moreover, this marriage had been fruitful? Truly the prize was snatched out of the very clutch of France. But however late, it was early enough. For from the disturbances continually arising out of the quarrels of the Scottish barons, both among themselves and with their sovereign, a king residing in London could not have maintained his authority sufficiently in Edinburgh, and Scotland might have been as sharp a thorn in the side of England as was Ireland. How much after all remained to be overcome is shown by the fact of the countries not being formally united until a century after the crowns had rested upon one head.

Thus we see how many chances lay in the way against the union of the three kingdoms. Scotland may have been to England but as Norway is to Sweden, as Hungary is to Austria, or even as Portugal is to Spain. And Ireland

may have been asserting independence of her and maintaining it through dependence on France or Spain. But the Lord interfered in our favour, and gathered together and tempered all that seemed adverse under one sum of greater good. Blessed be his hands which have bound the bundle of rods together. What man who has the heart to acknowledge his goodness would wish to separate them?

It is true that our imagination will fondly dwell on our old nationalities, as they are called. But ought we, with an adequate knowledge of their times, and in use of our common understanding, which can discern good from evil, to wish to live in them? If not, and who with the slightest knowledge of them would, then surely it were not merely childish pride and pedantry, but it would also involve dishonesty and mischievous folly to recur from an easy chair in admiration to days of unsettled barbarism, when life and property were in continual jeopardy, and amid the enjoyment of manifest providential blessings

which called for thanksgiving, to utter a wish for an alteration of the unalterable law of God's providence, which forms nations, not partially, according to their own wild affections, but generally, according to his own wise counsels; not by ties of blood, but by force of neighbourhood, aggregating the weaker races around the stronger. Otherwise, the world, in such a state of minute division of its people, would be ever dashed to pieces more minute still, by the wear and tear of parts, while occasionally it would be swept, as under a hurricane, by barbarous hordes suddenly aggregated, like dust by the wind, into one overwhelming host. The poetic spirit may prefer the illuminated manuscript to the printed book, the bow to the rifle, the castellated frontier to the cultivated border. But men of common sense and practical truthfulness are well content with the plain and comfortable prose of their own days and position.

So let Englishman, Scotchman, Irishman,

Welshman, joined as they are with equal privileges into one social system, such as for supply of true happiness the world has never yet seen, accept the situation assigned to them by the Creator of nations, and all bless Him together with one voice for his marvellous gift. In proportion to the knowledge and good sense with which they all look back on their former independence of each other, with so much the more heartiness will they thank Him for an union which his hand alone could have effected, and will cherish dearly as dutifully the bonds of brotherhood into which He alone could have drawn and tied them. They cannot but see that apart they would be nothing, while together they are everything. Therefore, what God hath joined together let no man think to put asunder. But let all consider in sober fact what by his blessing we are, and not in romance of imagination what by our barbarism we have been. It were surely the greatest of follies to look back on the blossom of spring with a regretful longing for the pre-

sence of its colour and smell, while autumn was displaying around us the fruit in all its ripeness for taste, and plentifulness for use. All thanks, therefore, be to the Almighty Husbandman from every mouth.

CHAPTER XIII.

On England's Especial Call.

WE have been insisting, all along, upon the ground of England having received an especial call from God, which we think is clearly signified equally in the nature, and in the order of the facts of our history. But it may be very plausibly objected, that England has no right to arrogate to herself especial divine direction; that other nations can show as eventful histories; and that wonderful changes in their fortunes proclaim a divine Lord governor for them no less than for her; that the God of one part is God of another part of the great whole, which is His, all in all. No one will be found to deny this. We have already argued that all nations have their instrumentality in the Church of God, and are in their several ways

contributing to the fulfilment of the great end which Prophecy has set before us in those words —“The kingdoms of the world are become our Lord’s and our Christ’s, and He shall reign for ever and ever.”—(Rev. xi. 15.) Even Naples, unknown for any good, and too well known for some evil, has its place in this economy. All are doing some work in the Church of God; through all their operation there is something tending to the grand object of Christ being preached. All are people, but all are not priests. All are employed, but all have not been ordained. All have been set to the work of the Temple of God’s Church, but all are not superior to the charge of hewing wood, and of but serving in the sanctuary. All are not even so much as conscious of their work being in any way concerned with that glorious edifice, and would laugh in scorn if told that it was. But we believe in our having received a commission from the Most High, and that we are accordingly executing it. This we think that we can show, proving that it is the grand article in our

charter from God, and that, according as we abide by it or shrink from it, we rise or fall.

Upon the very head of union, then, which has been just discussed, we do not forget that other kingdoms have been formed by the combination of several independent nations. For example, Austria has notoriously been made up of pieces which came together by most fortunate marriage. Prussia, also, is an aggregation of people of strange tongues and strange lands, formed in great part during the last century, partly by war, partly by diplomacy, partly by something not quite so honourable. Again, France has been gradually composed, through means either of conquest or of marriage, by the several additions of Brittany, Burgundy, Normandy, Provence, Lorraine, and the rest. Spain also has united into one the kingdoms of Navarre, Arragon, Castile, and Grenada. All these have been brought together by the events to which time has ever and anon given birth along its course, and some of them, in spite of powerful natural obstacles, by opportu-

nities quite as unlooked for as those by which the parts of Great Britain were brought into one. Why, then (is the question) may they not put in a claim to an equal share in God's providential arrangement, and what reason have we for boasting of a singular guardianship and direction from heaven ?

Now we do not venture to dispute their equality, so far as to their having a place in God's economy of his Church ; but we do as to their degree of instrumentality in it. We do not deny their having been brought to the starting-place, but we do deny their being visible upon the course. For in the consideration of this higher claim we are not to confine our view to the mere means : for their real character cannot be ascertained until we come to the end. And, however extraordinary they may appear, yet we must proceed in our judgment as in the case of a miracle, which we cannot always distinguish from a work of unaccountable wonderfulness, until we see its result in an effect which directly concerns the revela-

tion of God's truth. National events, therefore, when ascribed to God's especial providence, must have their title proved by their tendency to promote the cause of the Gospel. It would require a long exposition of facts to decide this question : and therefore it is well that there are two points as to which all can be put to a fair and open trial. These are, the treatment given to the Reformation, and the progress of the Gospel to the uttermost part of the earth, through progress of empire. Let us try France on these points.

As a nation she wilfully extinguished the reformation of God's Church, opposing to it terrible persecutions through blood and fire, and her robe is drenched red with the most horrible massacre that has ever been committed. Nor has she done anything since to wash it clean. Her Bourbons continued the spirit of persecution until it was met by as bloody a match, and overcome by that spirit of revolution which, while it judicially extinguished them, impartially put down all manifestation

whatsoever of revealed religion, whether corrupt or incorrupt, in the land. At this day she is, both on ecclesiastical and political ground, as adverse as ever to the cause of God's truth, and busy in propagating the Medieval Church, with even additional corruptions, as furnishing an opening and ground for her influence. Occupied with selfish views of her own aggrandisement, she has never seriously thought, however she may boast, of promoting civilization, but has continually thrown it back when it wore a flattering look of advance, through the disturbance caused by her restless ambition, and is throwing it back at this day. Instead of being to Europe a centre of confidence and security, she has been a focus of suspicion, peril, and mischief, and seems to find her glory in being the terror of her neighbours, and not the comfort—in being the spoiling wasp, and not the storing bee; and therefore she has failed on the second point also. She next lost her colonial empire, which at one time promised at least equality with

ours, and with it, of course, the means, even if she had the will, of sending the Gospel on its way to all nations. She therefore utterly fails when put upon her trial as to this grand question of especial commission.

It is obvious, also, how unsatisfactory an answer must come from Spain, the implacable opponent from first to last of all religious reformation; so that she has lost the best portion of her splendid colonial empire through her bigotry. Even Holland, so gallant a champion of the Reformation, has not only long ago come to a standstill in her prosperous colonial progress, but has lost much of what she had. The answer from Portugal is too clear for especial remark. And there is no other power that can be said to be possessing a colonial empire. Our country, therefore, alone can come satisfactorily out of this trial.

This, her high position, exposes her to continual outbursts of unfriendly word, if not of hostile deed, from the continental nations, ascribing her greatness to her selfishness. But

she may well turn round upon them with the question, And where is your unselfishness? What good have ye done, or are ye doing, in the most unselfish work of all, that of bringing forth the ministry of God's truth? Your womb is barren. Ye are no joyful mothers of children. No sons and daughters look up to you from east, and west, and north, and south, clasping in their hands the book of God's truth. Appendages ye some of you have, but, attached by crime, they are like to the poisoned shirt which for being more closely drawn was only made more surely destructive. Instead of looking, as we do, fearlessly abroad, ye have enough to do at home in keeping your motley population in order, and therefore dare not relax those bonds which confine truth as the most dangerous of errors, while our population is spread as seed of Japhet over the whole earth, shed from England's ripe and open hull, and we stand in ministry to prophecy. At our hearths the progress of the Gospel in foreign lands is a familiar tale. There is hardly a

respectable family which does not show such an interest in the cause as to contribute something to it publicly or privately in the course of the year. And as we send forth mass after mass of emigrants from our shores they carry with them the leaven of the bread which perisheth not. But what distant and barbarous lands are receiving the truth from you? Where are your centres of light, where are the winged messengers of peace, whitening the seas with sails, overspreading the waste lands with dwellings, and sending with them your history with which is bound up the account of the advance of God's truth among you, and so amidst the victories of the state come those of his church, and all feel at home in both. Our country can stand up with a good conscience, and answer these questions. Her large family in Asia, Africa, America, Australia, testify to the truth in Christ, and are acting there as fresh centres for its propagation from the rising of the sun to the going down thereof.

When the forementioned countries shall have

shown a like proof of their calling, exhibited a similar testimony of their ordination to ministry in God's church, then shall their claim of an especially directed providence be gladly allowed, and the movement of the Almighty hand reverently traced through the events of their history. Hitherto we see no ground for it. But our times are rife with startling change, and a crisis may yet befall any one of them, which may discover a new point, and give a deep meaning to their past, and assure us that we have partners in the blessedness of our privilege. What a joyful day will that bring to us ! How gladly shall we give to them the right hand of fellowship, and receive them into the partnership of our labours in the Lord.

CHAPTER XIV.

On England's true Prospects.

THUS, from a small beginning, when she lay in a corner of the world, a byword and a proverb for remoteness, wrapt in the thick gloom of ignorance, shrouded in a mist of fable, we have traced the growth of our country up to a mighty empire, to a leading kingdom, which should be a suitable instrument for preparing the way of the kingdom of heaven. We have searched the Lord's ways, and found how He provided the means of such an end. It should then be a study of thankful delight to our hearts that we may grow continually wiser in the knowledge of these means, as the hand of the Lord proceeds in administering them ; seeing how it was

delivering when all was desperate, upholding when all was falling, reaching for us the good which seemed beyond hope, removing from us the evil whose inexorable fixedness made us despair.

Thus we trust that we are a building of God on earth, in preparation for his building in heaven; and we must confess to its being both wonderfully and fearfully made. Let us then mark its bulwarks well, and examine his handiwork as we tell its towers. — (Psalm xlviii. 13). Slowly, but surely, has its frame been adjusted. Strangely has a vast variety of stones been brought together—and stones that seemed useless, and even set in the wrong places, have proved to be necessary, and even arranged in the fittest places. Wonderful is the balance of parts, admirable the harmony of the whole. And, therefore, it is also fearfully made. For we have to take good heed; and whatsoever we think to do, to strive to do all exactly after the same model. We have to deal with that which

has come from the Lord's hand, and, as in the case of the tabernacle, after the pattern that the Lord had shown all was to be done, so must it here.—(Exodus xxv. 9). Let us look to Him, the architect of heaven and earth, the edifier of soul and spirit, and in the patience of faith do likewise. Then we shall have no mind for recklessly pulling down, and building up again after our own untried plan, and in our short day, and in a fancied superior way, that on which the wisdom and power of the Almighty God has spent ages. Even, indeed, could we persuade ourselves to think it a work of chance, we should reasonably be anxious to maintain our good luck, and should guard more carefully than ever against evil, considering that the more prizes we have drawn, so much the fewer remain for us to draw. But, taking it for the work of God, we must also accept the corresponding law of God ; which is, that according to what we have had given we must give, according to his manifested counsel we must act, and accord-

ing to his free bounty we must be exact stewards.

The more we consider this point, so much the more are we struck with the discovery of our own inability. The past review of our history should have taught us that the measures designedly proposed by man in his cunning for securing good and great results seldom, if ever, succeed. The very exactness of the proportion of the means to the end, as it seems to his eyes, confines and cramps his work, and by its partiality deranges the grand total out of which every lasting good must come. No room is left for the free and full play of the machine, which therefore cannot work with the necessary power and regularity, and disappoints the fond calculations of the projector. We have examples of this in the consequences of elaborate constitutions. Among the ancients, we find Lycurgus legislating for the formation of a hero, and producing a savage ; and among the moderns, the National Assembly of France providing for the education of a citizen, and

rearing a devil. But no especial code has formed the Englishman. His political constitution has grown up according to no prescribed model, his empire has been established on no craftily designed policy.

In general we are brought to confess that, in order to any good or lasting end, man must not be his own instrument, but God's. As the face of the earth, on which he lives, and moves, and has his being, was not reduced to its present state of fitness for his habitation at once, but gradually, through operations, none of which in their day would have seemed to us conducive to that end, but rather destructive of it, such as flood and earthquake, so any truly good moral or political system of things is established by God through agencies of man, which, while they are taking place, seem to us to be leading rather to any other result. But, as in the former case, time freely allowed brought all the manifold causes successively into action and combined effect, so, in this, a grand good is the end of many operations of

man, unnoticed or misunderstood by the generations through which they passed, until the appointed age has included and combined the results of all the causes. Surely we have reason for patience and faith, and must look most carefully into the detail of whatever reparation we deem fit to make in that which God hath given us, and see that it be in due harmony with the gift, and neither add to nor take away from the rule which he has prescribed for us.

We have received a very clear admonition on this point in the startling discoveries which have lately been made, setting at nought many of our fixed principles, and rendering useless much of our old machinery. Our wisdom does indeed stand rebuked, but the serious heart is impressed with, not only a very fearful, but also thankful feeling, when it perceives his gracious bounty coming from the opened hand of God, not only in greater plenty, but also through channels entirely new, and conveying greater power. What, therefore, we proceed

to ask, has He still in reserve for us in this age of revolution, when such great changes are daily surprising us, and these, too, are avowedly accepted but as the forerunners of more extraordinary still. Science is unfolding secrets which evidently involve discoveries more wonderful than anything which the mind of man can foresee, and we are daily building on new ground, ever as she opens it to us, or causes old to sink, for new to rise, and are employing new materials ever as she supplies them. Not only is the business of public life indebted to her inventions for its quicker and more effectual despatch, but also the comfort of private life for its more intense and prolonged enjoyment, and the bustling agitation of the one, and the luxurious quiet of the other, through the more complete ministry which now waits upon both, stand in greater contrast than ever.

Something must result out of this striking change of which we can form but a most imperfect notion at present. The pace at which it is going on is of that smooth rapidity which

amuses while it cheats the mind, and makes a man think that he is going entirely his own way while he is going quite another's. Oh! may ever that other be no other than He that leadeth the children of God, and hath led the wise and good among our forefathers, and by a continual prospering of their counsels, and by a continual frustrating of the designs of their adversaries, has brought our country through the events which He had prepared for it to such a pitch of national welfare.

One example of the general change is too remarkable to be passed over, especially as it concerns so immediately the political condition of nations, internally and externally. It is the invention of instruments of more certain death and destruction by sea and by land, which has come from the same forge as those of our greater enjoyment of life. Alas! that to man in this sinful state evil must ever come in company with good. But it is the Christian's duty not to be content with that state, but to contend against it, and not to be overcome of it, but to

overcome it with good.—(Rom. xii. 21.) So let us look forward from faith and a good conscience in hope.

But assuredly, henceforward our history, together with that of the whole world, will assume a new feature from this invention of the longer and surer aim, and of the more deadly destructiveness of the missile weapons of war. The political change will be something analogous to that produced by the perfection of the armour of the knights of old. Light-armed as they were, the people could make no stand against such impenetrable covering. And a weary age of baronial ravage, and of knightly tyranny followed, until cannon and the musket broke the old defence which had been abused to so much offence, and brought things round to their just place again. So now the more powerful instruments of war threaten once more to add to the power of the more powerful, and poverty, which used to be the incentive to the valour of nations, will but bring them into the greatest danger of being

conquered. Woe to the people that shall be caught unprovided with these products of laborious skill, of heavy expense, and of long time. Woe to the needy, woe to the ignorant, woe to the covetous, woe to the unready. Preparation for war in the midst of peace will henceforth alone be able to ensure peace, or indeed give any warranty for safety.

How much all this will tell on the fortunes of nations, as concerned with one another, needs not to be stated. Nor again how deeply it will affect their internal polity. A rebellion will become impossible against a government of common precaution. For an adequate preparation of force cannot possibly be concealed where the machinery is so large and so heavy, nor easily provided when so costly. And thus the government may deter with terrible ostentation, while its enemy must disclose the secret of his treason with the slightest note of anything like an adequate preparation. What a vast moral and political revolution therefore is contained in this one simple mechanical change,

what agitations of spirit will come from this modification of body. What a still more unjust thing than ever will unjust war become, when it will not be generous valour, but cold-blooded science that will conduct it, and not iron wielded by power of arm, but iron forged at great cost of gold shall give the victory.

But many though the evils may be, we know that there must be a store of good also, and amidst it we can already discover this, namely, that there is an end to the incursions of barbarous people on the civilized, and that history will never have to repeat the tales of the Attilas and Timours, at least as long as a drop of oil shall be left in the lamp of science. Nor will a Babylon again fall before a Cyrus, nor a Rome before an Alaric. The faintest heart may have the cleverest hand, and well taught skill will much more than ever be more than a match for rude strength.

Our beloved country is, therefore, together with all the world, entering upon a new and untried course, and through what, and to what

at any time that shall lead what heart among us shall guess? But this we know from our past, this we can assuredly gather from the retrospect of her history which we have now reviewed, that if we be faithful to the service to which he has called us, He that delivered our fathers will deliver us, the angel that redeemed them from all evil will bless their children. He that hath done so much for us already, will, if we be thankful, do much more still for the future, and evermore be with us in the ship of our state, sit at the helm, and guide us safe while it is ploughing unknown seas under unknown stars. He has provided us well for the voyage, our vessel is strong and sound. From his moulding hand we possess a constitution of state, firm and yet flexible, which allows us to adapt ourselves to all the various positions which our circumstances from time to time may demand from wise men. It is not stereographed in abstract impracticability, as has been the case where such things have been attempted on the continent, for want

of a substantial middle class, clearly distinguished from an upper and from a lower, and yet running up into one and down into the other, and thus bracing both together. Neither is it unfitted, as in America, for want of an acknowledged upper class. It has, therefore, passed already unscathed through trials which are proving fatal to the despotism of Russia, and to the democracy of the United States, after having demolished the constitutionalism of France.

We can therefore freely allow our nearest neighbours to vapour in their vain glory as they will, and can let them boast of destinies being accomplished, and of their power to bind the fortunes of the world. We are well satisfied with the substantial part which we have to do, and with having received from God in our well-tempered constitution the blessed privilege of loosing no less than of binding. Our commission is to teach the truth which we have been taught, to impart the freedom which we have received, to main-

tain fast the bonds of love, and loosen the fetters which enthrall knowledge: so to glorify God for our especial Maker among the nations by a faithful stewardship.

Great were the privileges of the calling of God's people of old. Even in their ruin they were precious to Him and for his use. And the fall of them was the riches of the world.—(Rom. xi. 12.) We have already remarked how they were scattered by his hand through all countries, that they may spread among the heathen the rudiments of the doctrine, the elements of the preparation of the Gospel. In his wrath he broke the vessel of their body with a rod of iron, and dispersed them to do in fragments what they had refused to do when whole. But unto us He has had a favour, and in the very bountiful goodness of it, and in the very overflowing of our prosperity, has scattered our people throughout a world, one half of which was then utterly unknown, but is now to us well known, and contains states large and flourishing, founded

by our labours on the hunting-grounds of wild tribes. And we can firmly trust that as long as we bear his name in reaching the ends of the earth, and testify to his glory in the uttermost parts of the world, we need not fear. The Lord our God is with us even to the very end.

Rapidly, indeed, are old things passing away, and daily are new things coming on. When we look back but to the beginning of this century we seem to gaze on a strange antique state of the world, on a remnant of the medieval state, and former stage of the world's history. The map of Europe bears mainly its old names, but how different is the state of the countries. On the continent even the figment of the Roman Empire, harmless though it had become, is gone, and the last pretence to a remnant of the Old World has perished. A mighty revolution has this been, and shaken kingdoms to their centre. But they had not the elasticity with which to meet it. We, however, have had. Our education, as we have seen it conducted by Almighty

God, has enabled us to meet every occasion, as old things passed away, and new things came on, with a due putting forth of our new and old.

But our fickle neighbours are incapable of understanding this moderation, and often mock at us for our slow relinquishment of the old, and our cautiously qualified reception of the new. It is our maxim, however, and experience proves it to be a wise one, that the new can never come safely, except from and through the old. By consequences, which God's law has attached, we know the bearing of the old, and so far are bold and forward. But we have no experience to assure us of the nature of the new, and therefore are cautious and slow. Hence we have been charged with a want of originality, and taunted with a spirit of compromise. Be it so by all means. We could not desire a plainer testimony to the soundness of our principle. For it is the spirit of which God has all along, through the range of our history, admonished us that we ought to be. Our union of kingdoms is a compromise, our

mongrel people is a compromise, our motley language is a compromise, our varied society is a compromise, our codeless law is a compromise, our moderate Church is a compromise, our mixed constitution is a compromise; yea, and our varied climate is a compromise—a compromise from God, to whom we can herein refer for our example with thankfulness and confidence, and boast of that of which they call upon us most loudly to complain. And, educated under such a system of compromise in body and mind, we are enabled to understand that most difficult of all moral problems, the just conditions and proper limits of compromise, and so to conduct ourselves with such moderation and foresight as to be of all nations the least obnoxious to the charge of the deadly compromise of doing evil that good may come. We have patience to wait for the good, and can look in the face and endure the introductory evil. Verily we need not be ashamed of the character which we therefore bear among our neighbours, who, while they praise us for our

sound practical good sense, affect to pity us for our dislike to all abstract and unpractical questions. We may be truly proud of it, as of an excellent gift from God, improved by good use. It is true, indeed, that thus our constitution wants that apparently direct bearing upon grand points, that concentration of application to a main object, together with the philosophical cast and logical exactness which may be seen in others, as they have figured upon paper, though never been seen elsewhere. Ours has been framed for daily use and work, and not for the nightly reading of the philosopher in his study. Therefore, it is not like those, as worthless as the paper on which they are written.

Ours has been written in the hearts of the nation on living tablets, and not on that which at any time, in a moment of dissatisfaction, may be thrown into the fire, or at best locked up in the Record-office. Let us take it as from God, and, led by the hand of Him who causes nations to rise and to fall, we shall boldly meet whatsoever perilous chance time may bring. We

know that God has been with us—we believe that He is with us—we hope that He will be with us. And we can confidently call upon Him to remember his mercies of old, to inspire our hearts and minds with wisdom to make a thankful use of them, to breathe fresh vigour into our institutions, to infuse prudence into our counsels, to quicken our public spirit. So will every one be found at his post under the Almighty Captain, and see the cause of his country in the counsels of God, and in the coming of his kingdom. His hand has been outstretched in our defence of old, and we are convinced that it will not be shortened now. Oh, may He fill the hearts of our politicians with the wholesome persuasion that the more we know of God, so much the more shall we understand of the real interests of our nation; the more we love God, so much the more shall we love our country; and the more faithful we are found to our high calling in God's Church, so much the more steadfast shall we prove in our duty towards dear old England.

CHAPTER XV.

On England's Duties.

HAVING now seen what the Lord God has done for England, and what a field lies before her on which to exercise the wonderful means with which He has entrusted her for his service, and to display to the whole world her thankful sense of the favour which He has had unto her, let us close with considering this apostleship, and learn of what spirit we ought to be, enabled, as we are, to look for an example to one who was especially charged with preaching the Gospel to the nations.

The Apostle St. Paul says, “that he considered himself as a debtor to the Gentiles, whether they were Greeks, or barbarians, wise or unwise.”—(Romans i. 14.) For since he

could tell Philemon, "Thou owest unto me even thine own self," how much more could he say to Christ, who had interfered in so miraculous a way to convert him: "I owe unto thee mine own self." And if to him a debtor, then also to all those in whom he chose to represent himself. And this representation he does exhibit to his servants in every one who presents himself before them with need of their help to body or soul. For he has warned all of the reckoning of the last day; when he will say to those who have been found faithful: "Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."—(Matthew xxv. 40.)

Thus, then, he was a debtor to Greeks, to barbarians, to wise, and to unwise. In them he was to see Christ, and do unto Christ, who would fain have them for his brethren, and declare his Father's name unto them; and in the midst of the Church sing praise unto Him. And surely his case is not singular,

except in the extraordinary powers which he received for his ministry. But every Christian, professing, as he does, a similar call to God's service, is a debtor on the same ground to the same party. And such duties must also belong to bodies of men. Their corporation implies co-operation; and every work of this world has to do with the work of the world to come; and the more important that work shall be, so much the more will it be concerned with the work of the world to come, and the more real success shall attend it; so much the more, were it only on the ground of thankfulness, should the society be zealous to do its duty as to the world to come. How, indeed, can a body, every one of whom is a debtor to one and the same creditor, not be a general debtor to him, especially when their corporation has enabled them with means of paying that debt, by bringing them within reach of their creditor, after having increased their means of doing good. It, in fact, comes nearer to the apostolic model, as having its

call more public, and its capability of service much greater. And, therefore, a Christian nation, called to confront the Gentiles in the course of the prosperity with which God hath blessed it, may be designated in this case not, indeed, an apostle, but certainly an apostolical nation.

Therefore we conclude that our country, having been called by the Lord to his service by a series of wonderfully gracious interferences in her behalf, and endowed with vast means, is a debtor to the whole world before whom she stands, and especially to the heathen part of it; which so much more needs her assistance. In them, hungry and thirsty in their souls, from utter want of spiritual meat and drink, she is to see Christ hungry and thirsty, and to minister to them the meat and drink which perish not, that they may all eat the same spiritual meat, and all drink the same spiritual drink with the family of God, and so she is to minister to Christ meat and drink. In them, aliens from the commonwealth of

Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, she is to see Christ a stranger, and by converting them into fellow-citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, to take Christ in. In them she has to see Christ naked, stripped as they have been of the beautiful garments of Adam's innocence; and to clothe them in the robes washed white in the blood of the Lamb, and so to clothe Christ. And in them she has to see Him sick, even unto death; in them, sick in all the diseases of our infected mind and corrupted heart, to see him bearing our sicknesses; and in fleeing to their help and cure, to visit Christ. And in them, tied and bound with the fetters of sin, fast in the captivity of the devil, she is to see Christ in prison, and in relieving them to come unto Him.

After having thus shown in what relation she stands unto the Lord, is the tongue too free which has admonished her thus? Does it, on the one hand, come impertinently nigh unto her affairs, or does it, on the other hand,

go away from them into distant and speculative duties with which she feels no practical concern? Surely no Englishman will say so, who has put his heart to the earnest study of her eventful history. But he will gladly own that his country is a debtor, like as St. Paul was, through its conversion to a Christian country, and through the ministry so plainly imposed upon her, and that, as members of her body, we are all individually debtors on the same account: and that none of us can individually have undergone any conversion of heart, if we can look with indifference on so mighty a cause.

Indeed a day cannot pass to an Englishman without his meeting with something to remind him of his position as such, if he saw God in any thing at all of that day, yea even, when the heart is lightest, when he is eating and drinking. The ordinary breakfast of all ranks of our nation is furnished out from the furthest east and the furthest west, sending their tea and coffee and sugar: and we even find that

one of the grains of common domestic use, our rice, traverses on its way to us the North Atlantic or Indian Ocean, and that a large portion even of our ordinary daily bread is received from a world of which our forefathers until later times had never heard; nor would they have believed in its existence if told. And the material of the clothing which we daily put on may come to us in the shape of cotton sent from America in the far west of the earth, and its die from India in the far east.

Surely there is a deep meaning in all this. We are manifestly fed, like the chosen people of old in the wilderness, from that which the ground around us is incapable of supplying; we are fed with manna from the hand of the providential director of the winds of heaven. What an extraordinary change indeed has taken place since our forefathers were entirely supported from the produce of the neighbouring fields. Have not old things past away, and all things become new to our nation. Is she not plainly admonished that she must be

a new creature in Christ, and not like a mere worldly power.

Thus we are daily and manifestly reminded that God has exalted our nation to a high service, to a wide ministry, that He has made her a mistress of nations, that she may be a handmaid to Him, and make a return to them, in his name, of spiritual benefits for the spiritual and bodily which she has received. Shall any one of us then presume to say that anything acquired by us is his own? Will any thinking heart, for instance, say that he paid for his tea, his coffee, his sugar, his cotton, his rice, and therefore is fully discharged of all debt, having honestly done all the duty which can be required of him in the matter? He has indeed paid man. But has he paid man's master who sent and enabled his servant to produce and to carry. Has he paid spiritual money to Him by assisting in this spiritual work, even to Him who hath told him that He is so scrupulously just in himself, and, therefore, requires such scrupulous honesty

from those that deal with Him, that He will not be satisfied with less than the uttermost farthing of his due. Oh ! what Christian is capable of saying grace with the same quantity of matter, and with the same fervour of thanksgiving, as the English. Surely foreigners ought to have observed that earnestness and regularity on this point peculiarly distinguish the English table. It is a sad thing where they are disappointed.

England's mission is daily expanding before her progress. And it is most interesting to look back from it for a few moments, and obtain some notion of the rate of expansion. At the time when our Church first began a fresh course with her Reformation, England had not a single foreign dependency, and, so far from coming into contact with the heathen, and as their superiors too, in every quarter under heaven, as now every day, our forefathers knew practically nothing beyond Europe, and such parts of Asia and Africa as border on the Mediterranean. And there the heathen were

gathered under one formidable head, to which we could not but confess worldly inferiority, while the proud fanaticism of their religion resolutely and despitefully repelled, as it does at this day, every approach of the Gospel. This was the Turkish Empire, which stood up, in not only a defiant, but aggressive attitude against Christendom, and represented, as it were, the heathen body drawn up in battle array against it. Hence, in the language of those times, Turk stands as the general term for heathen, and in our collect for Good Friday reminds us of the terror of our forefathers as well as of their charity. And even after less implacable heathen were encountered in the newly-discovered lands, there was required a long preparatory communication before we could introduce the Gospel with any effect among them. But the precious opportunity was deferred to a still longer time than otherwise would have been sufficient by the civil agitations which followed our ecclesiastical changes, and confined the attention of church

and nation wholly and painfully to affairs at home. It was not until the eighteenth century commenced that these troubles ceased, and a calm began which has continued until this day. Then the heathen came into sight again, and in the middle of the second year of the century was founded the earliest society that took their case into consideration under the title of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts.

But, after all, our great missionary staff consists of our countrymen settled among the heathen, and this brings on our country a deep responsibility as to their education at home and their conduct abroad. Here, indeed, is a matter which comes nearer still to the real interests of the English home than the meat and drink which come from commerce to the bodies of the family. For how many souls among the heathen thousands of miles off are dependent upon its conditions? and how terribly may they rise up in judgment against those who, in the full capability, if not enjoyment,

of such blessedness, have so slighted the privilege as to send forth their children from home not only powerless for the spread of the Gospel, but even powerful for its hindrance, being, instead of shapely stones of exact Christian example, on which the heathen may be built into the Church, mere boulderstones to cause stumbling!

England, if she would maintain herself in God's favour, must look to this vital point of duty which has followed her high prosperity. Why, with all her vast means, has so little of it been done? Some part of her shortcoming may be owing to her very profession of Christianity, with which the conduct of her children when they go among the heathen is generally but too little consistent. In the early period of the Church, conversion of the heathen would have been far more rapid under such circumstances. For it must, indeed, be confessed that even while she was assisted by extraordinary gifts of the spirit, she had this great advantage also—that the heathen nations

were scarcely visited by any others calling themselves Christians than Christian missionaries, or at least Christians in confession as well as profession. The body of soldiers, sailors, taxgatherers, police, factors, and the rest of the classes most contaminated with the service of the world, and most frequently encountered in daily intercourse, bore the thorough heathen stamp, in sharp contrast to the Gospel, and consistently with their contempt of it. But now the very first visit, and the most frequently repeated from this country, is not only by this class, but also by men whose lives are a practical denial of the Christian profession, and therefore bring it into open shame. And yet they have come from the bosom of the families of England. Oh! how much that passed in their secret chambers is afterwards published on the housetops far away! How miserably do flaws, unamended by a godly discipline, there disclose themselves in wide rents in those distant scenes, where the constraint of its public opinion, which stood for principle, can no longer work.

What a high calling, indeed, has an English family in the Church of God! How deep must be the condemnation of that which comes short!

Great, it must be allowed, within the last century, has been the growth of the missionary labour of England. But still it cannot endure the judgment to which it is challenged by a too common boast among us, that she is doing more in the cause of the Gospel than all the Christian world beside. For what if England has received more means than all the Christian world beside, both in position and in institutions, and moreover in the concentrated form which her work accordingly takes? What if we are bound, therefore, to infer that we have been especially singled out, peculiarly endowed, abundantly gifted, for the service? It will surely rather become us to lament over the very much that has been left undone, and to seek to repair the deficiency, than to exult over the very little that has been done, and to take things at our ease.

Never may we forget the tenure upon which England is holding her all. Others have been tried before her. Spain and Portugal are memorable examples of the fate which awaits unfaithful stewards of God's truth. And yet they were zealous in the propagation of their religion. But they had not, and would not have the knowledge, and therefore their service was not accepted. What then will He do with her, if so rich in means, so full of knowledge, she make no adequate attempt to relieve the spiritual destitution of the splendid empire committed to her charge? Let her take good heed from the warning which she has so lately received in India: let the present dreadful disorganization of the American states, which in due time may affect all her colonies, similarly instituted as they have been, warn her that the Anglo-Saxon (as it is the fashion to call the Englishman) may be found as much wanting as his predecessors, and still more encumber the face of the world with the ruins of former greatness. Oh, let her remember

that her commission is to establish the Lord's kingdom and not her own.

Never since nations were formed has one received a call to duty like that which has been given to England. As we have been hearing, her whole history resounds with it. By such ears the whole heathen world, much of it comprehended within her dominions, should be heard crying, "Thou that hast been so much helped, come and help us." Was ever a cry so clear in utterance, so importunate in earnestness, lifted up to a nation before? Oh, may she answer it as continually as she hears it. Were she to show indifference, where would be her claim to her high post, where her perception of light out of darkness, of forgiveness out of condemnation, of sonship out of strangership, of the Holy Spirit out of the evil spirit, of peace with God out of the state of his wrath, of the truth and glory of the life eternal out of the falsehood and misery of the life present; of beauty out of ashes, of the oil of joy out of tears of mourn-

ing, of the garment of praise out of the spirit of heaviness? Here is the heart and mind of a Christian nation: from such principles she sallies forth to lasting empire; from such she gives, and it is given to her again sevenfold into her bosom. Then let the whole world cry "havoc," and she will not fear: for that wild cry will but add sharpness of expression to the deep and solemn note which tolls daily in every serious heart throughout this land, summoning to the service of his Church, assuring with wisdom and truth, and enduring with good courage for performance even unto the end.

THE END.

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